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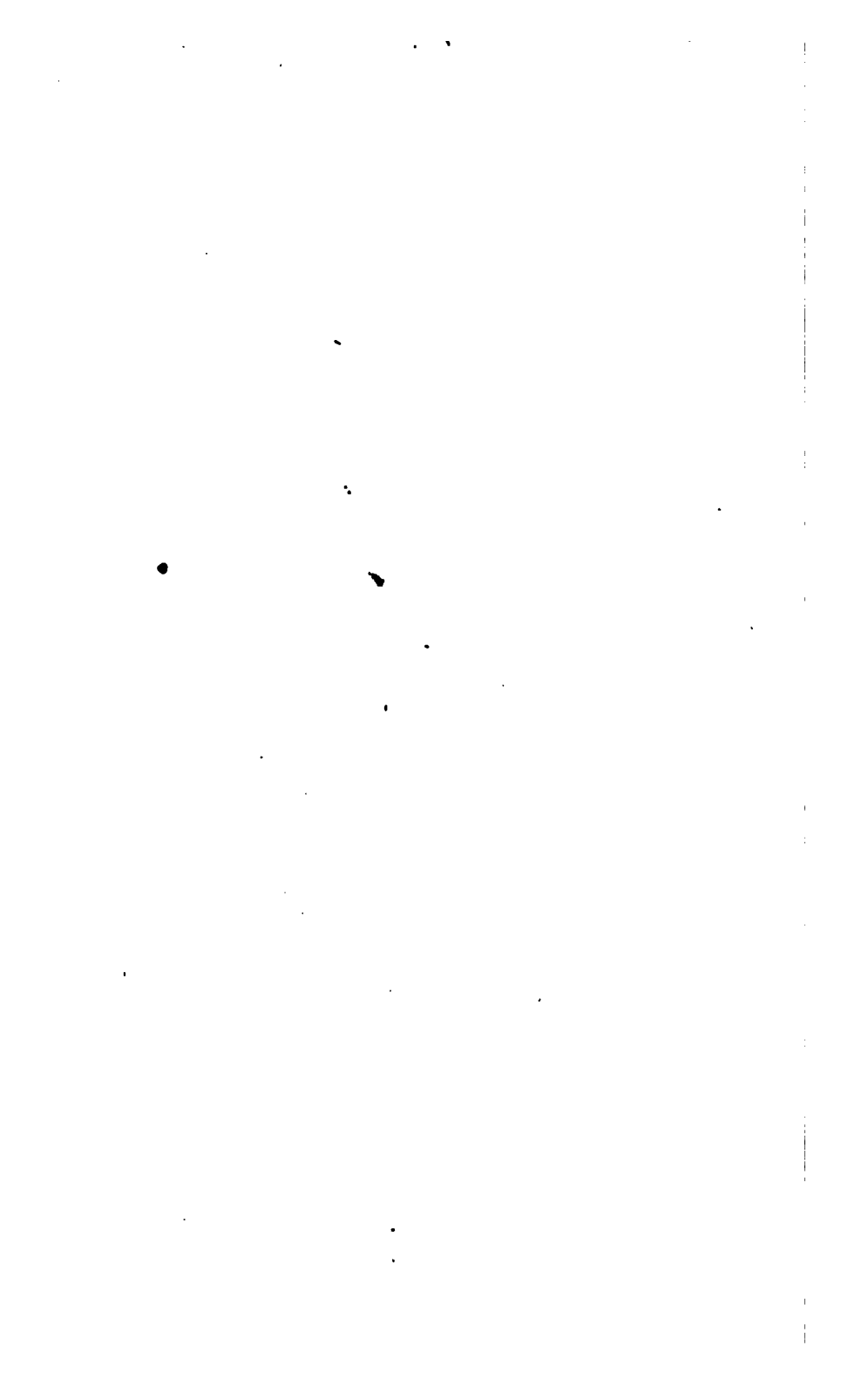
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Eliza Wadson.

June 7th 1834

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THE JOY OF FAITH

IN THE
SHADOW OF DEATH:

ADDRESSED TO THE
Respectable FAMILY of the BLAKERS
OF BOLNEY, IN SUSSEX,

UPON
THE DEATH

OF
AN INDULGENT HUSBAND, A TENDER FATHER,
AND AN HONEST BELIEVER IN CHRIST.

BY
HIS UNWORTHY FATHER IN THE FAITH; AND THEIR
AFFECTIONATE FRIEND AND SERVANT IN
THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST,

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S. S.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL
AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET,
AND AT MONKWELL-STREET MEETING.

*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the
land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Isai. ix. 2.*

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THE JOY OF FAITH.

LETTER I.

TO W. H. S. S.

Bolney, Dec. 9, 1804.

I HAVE just now received my kind friend's affectionate and supporting epistle, for which I beg you to accept a thousand thanks from me. For these three days past (besides my other troubles) something has been suggested to my mind, that, if my poor father is taken away, you will then favour us no more with your summer visits, and that we shall no more hear from you, or be favoured with the comfort of your acquaintance. But I desire to be thankful to God that this is only a suggestion from the enemy. I much fear, my dear friend, that you will no more see my dear father's face in the flesh; for it is not expected that he will be alive when you receive this.

On Wednesday evening last he seemed to grow much worse. In the same night I went from Worth to Bolney; and on the next day, from one o'clock till three, we all thought he was going off. But even in those moments, when he was upon the verge of death, he looked round upon us all, three or four different times, and gave us such an heavenly smile as appeared wonderful; and really the tranquillity, peace, and consolations, that he seems to enjoy, are beyond expression. I was up with him alone the greatest part of the ensuing night, after he had been so exceedingly ill, and was then a little recovered; at which time he spoke very freely, and a good deal, to me. I said to him, "You was very ill yesterday?" "Yes," said he, "I was; but what I felt nobody knows, the rays of light upon me were as the glory of Lebanon." *Isai. xxxv. 2.* "I cannot describe," said he, "the glory that shone upon me." And he added, "In my worst moments I have always found it so. But some little time back, when I seemed to get a little better in body, then I felt bondage and darkness come upon me." The words in one of your former letters were brought fresh to my mind, by a speech of my poor father's to my sister Mary. She was standing by him, apparently very low, and filled with grief. He looked up at her, and said, "My dear, we should not sorrow as others which have no hope." *1 Thess. iv. 13.* Poor dear man! I am much cast down at the

thoughts and fears of losing him. But I hope God will enable me to submit to his sovereign will. Never, no never, since I have been upon earth, have I found myself so completely crucified to this world, and to all things beneath the sun, as I do at this time. There is not one thing upon earth that I feel alive to, or have any desire after. But, from heart-felt experience, I can say that my soul thirsteth after God, and my soul is stirred up to seek him with my whole heart. And at times I am enabled to pour out my soul before him, and to shew him my trouble, and to cast all my cares and burdens upon him, and that with a secret persuasion that he careth for me. What you say in your's is true; that nothing but the Son of God, and faith in him, can stay the mind, or fix the heart, in times of trial. Many of the poor souls round about us seem sorely cut at the thoughts of losing my poor father; and I believe they have put up many petitions for his recovery; but I much fear that their request will not be granted. My poor sister is almost overwhelmed. I was in hopes that you would have come to see my father, and am sorry you did not; but, having heard that your health was poorly, I thought you might not be able to come. If he should revive again, and get a little better, I hope you will endeavour to see him once more. In his present state he is scarcely able to speak.

I shall comply with your request; and you may depend upon it that I will write from day to day, informing you how he goes on : indeed, I should have written before now, but was afraid of being troublesome to you, knowing that you have much on your hands. My poor father continues very sensible ; but takes little notice of any body, or of any thing. His breath is very bad, and he can take no sustenance but a little liquid in a tea-spoon.

Farewell. All the family unite in kind love to you ; and believe me to remain,

Dear friend,

Yours very affectionately,

E. B.

LETTER

LETTER II.

TO MISS E. B.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

GRACE and peace be multiplied through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your's came safe to hand, and I thank you for it; and my soul blesses the Almighty and eternal God for his undeserved kindness to your poor father, now in dying circumstances.

But all the children of God are not thus favoured. God Almighty has immutably fixed every thing belonging to his chosen household of faith, even their residence while in this world. The appointed days of their life, and the glorious end they shall make in death.

First, he has fixed their residence during their stay in this life, which is called his determination. He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. Acts xvii. 26.

The time of their life is unalterably appointed also. *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die.* Eccles. iii. 1, 2. When this day comes, go men must, for it is so appointed of God; and so says Jehovah himself. Nor can all the men upon earth deprive a saint of one single day. *The number*

of thy days I will fulfil. Exod. xxiii. 26. And the Lord said unto Moses, *Behold, thy days approach that thou must die.* Deut. xxxi. 14. No man under heaven can ever pass over this appointed day of his death.—*Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass.* Job xiv. 5. The determined measure of his days, and the number of his months, are so irrevocably fixed; that he cannot pass these bounds: just as a servant, who engages to serve for a time, and expects his hire and deliverance at the period of his appointment; so man accomplishes *as an hireling his day.* Job xiv. 6. Nor has the greatest favorite of God, and those who are most prevalent with him in prayer, any power to retain the soul one day, or one moment, in the body when once the appointed time of death comes. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.* Eccles. viii. 8.

As soon as I received your first letter, informing me of your father's illness, I went to lay it before God; and to entreat the Almighty to spare his useful life; but I felt a bar on my heart, so that I could not; nor did I dare, nor did I once pray for his life; and from that moment I was fully persuaded that he would never rise again. I told Lady Sanderfon, the same day, that he would surely die. And, when you sent a few lines to Miss Lavender, informing

informing her that he was better, Lady S—— told me of it. I replied to her ladyship, “ He will re-lapse again, for he will never rise any more.”

I shall now shew my dear friend the promises of God intended for a death-bed comfort, and of the different experiences of God’s children in their dying hours.

There are some who yield the obedience of faith, and yet have but little of the light of God’s countenance; as you read, *Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.* Isai. l. 10. Such souls are said to have bands in their death; Ps. lxxiii. 4. And yet these souls are safe, because they obey the voice of God’s servant, which is believing in Christ. Christ came to destroy him that had the power of death, which is the devil; and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb. ii. 14.

There are also very precious promises to those believers who have paid a tender regard and attention to other poor believers when they have been sick and afflicted; strengthening, comforting, encouraging them: and Christ himself will take notice of this in the great day. *I was sick, and ye visited me.* Matt. xxv. 36. And again, *For as much as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Matt. xxv. 40. Hence, the promise,

promise,—*Blessed is he that considereth the poor : the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive ; and he shall be blessed upon the earth : and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing : thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* Psal. xli. 1—3. There are four things promised in this passage.

1. He shall be delivered from his enemies, the worst of whom is Satan, and the second death.

2. That God will keep him alive ; for *He that liveth and believeth in me, says Christ, shall never die ;* that is, he shall never die the second death (John xi. 26) ; for *on such the second death hath no power.* Rev. xx. 6.

3. God promises to strengthen him upon the bed of languishing ; that is, inwardly to support him by his grace and Holy Spirit, so that the heavier his pains are the more support he shall have. *As thy days, so shall thy strength be.* Deut. xxxiii. 25. Where this is the case, the soul thrives in grace the faster as the body droops and declines. *But, though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

4. God makes his bed in his sickness ; that is, he is blessed with meekness, composure of mind, and submission to the will of God, which comforts his soul under bodily pains. A healthy soul will bear up under an infirm body, but a sin-sick soul is sure to sink. A man's spirit will sustain the infirmities

of the body; *but a wounded spirit who can bear?* Prov. xviii. 14. God gives all his children a good hope through grace; 2 Theff. ii. 16. And wherever God gives the grace of hope, there salvation is sure. *For we are saved by hope.* Rom. viii. 24. This hope has eternal life in it, and hence it is called a lively hope (1 Pet. i. 3.), in opposition to all dead hope, which perisheth at death; for *the hope of unjust men perisheth.* Prov. xi. 7. The hope that God gives is called the anchor of the soul, which keeps it from sinking in despondency, and from drowning in destruction and perdition. *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.* Heb. vi. 19. This hope is firm even in death itself. *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death.* Prov. xiv. 32.

These who have had an experience of the love of God, and who are said to be made perfect in love, and have been brought to exercise patience towards God under a daily cross, so as for patience (as James expresses it) to have had its perfect work, and who have come to some degree of perfection in the knowledge of Christ, are called perfect men; and such as love Christ are called upright men. Song. i. 4. Now God bids you attend the sick beds of such, and to observe and watch the end of them; and to take notice if God is not faithful to them, and to the promises that he has made to them—*Mark the perfect man, and behold*

bold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.
 Psalm xxxvii. 37.

Nothing short of faith in the Son of God can secure eternal life to men. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* John iii. 36. *As many as are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.* Gal. iii. 9. And God's blessing is life for evermore. Ps. cxxxiii. 3. Hence believers are said to be blessed in death, for they do not die in their sins; nor do they die in their flesh, trusting in themselves that they are righteous; but they die in the Lord, and the blessing of life attends them in death. *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.* Rev. xiv. 13. I have shewed my dear friend the promises God hath made to his children on a death bed; all of which you have seen and heard from the mouth of your father, yea and much more; for what I have taken notice of amounts to hope, peace, and the blessing of life: but your father has had the light of God's countenance with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And thus to die is to end one's days in the possession of the noblest wish, and the most capacious desire, in all the book of God; and this is the most expanded hope of the Apostle Paul. *The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every*
city,

city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me: but none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy. Acts xx. 23, 24. This is rising higher than internal support on the bed of languishing; it is more than simply the steadfastness of hope, which is an anchor of the soul, that counteracts despondency and keeps the vessel of mercy steady. It is more than dying in peace and friendship with God and conscience; for it is shouting victory in the jaws of death, and triumphing over the king of terrors, (Job xviii. 14) while in the field of action. It is finishing the warfare and fight of faith in the highest pitch of militant glory; and in the enjoyment of the most consummate felicity, promised, expected, or desired, in all the book of God. But there is no one thing in all this account that is strange to you. You yourself have, at times, (though but young) for some years experimentally known, felt, and enjoyed every one of them.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Ps. cxvi. 15. And, as the death of the saints is precious in the sight of God, it should not be grievous in ours. We are forbidden to give way to immoderate sorrow, because God has made an infinite difference between dying in sin, and dying in the Lord; between the believer and the infidel. The believer dies in faith; this is the revealed end of all. The pious patriarchs, prophets, and saints of old time, *all died in faith, not having received*

received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb. xi. 13.

And it is the eternal decree of God, which was made known to Adam, as soon as he fell, and exercised by Abel the protomartyr as soon as he approached to God, that the just man should live by his faith. Heb. ii. 4. Hence it is said that *by faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. Heb. xi. 4. Gen. iv. 4.* And we are told, in the New Testament, that faith, whether weak or strong, and whether exercised under the Old Testament, or under the New, comes to the same glorious end; namely, salvation from sin, from Satan, from death, from the grave, and from hell itself—*Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of the soul. 1 Pet. i. 9,* which is not a temporal, but a spiritual and an eternal one; for *Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. Isai. xlv. 17.*

The way to heaven is to follow Christ in the regeneration. Matt. xix, 28. Fear begins it, and love perfects and ends it. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Prov. i. 7. And the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. 1 Tim. i. 5.* Those who begin with fear will soon rise in hope ;
and

and where God gives hope there he gives an expectation of glory. *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Jer. xxix. 11. The wise man asserts the same—*My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul when thou hast found it; then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.* Prov. xxiv. 13, 14. To die in peace, my dear friend, proclaims us in friendship with God: to die in hope is to die in expectation of glory: to be blessed in death, and to die in the Lord; is to have the spring of endless life in the soul when the body is dying: to die in the enjoyment of love is to die stronger than death, and in union with God. Rev. xii. 11.—1 John iv. 16. But to die in joy is above all: joy is the quintessence of love; joy is the overflowings of a loving heart; and this is the highest bliss promised to a dying saint. *The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their head: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* Isai. xxxv. 10. The returning there meant is not coming to the militant church below; for all sorrow and sighing are not banished from her in this life: but Zion above is free from both these, and will never be exercised with them again: for God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death,

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neither

neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.
Rev. xxi. 4.

Tender my love and duty to mother ; my kind respects to your brother and sister ; the same to your aunt Hannah, and to your aunt and uncle Mathews ; and accept the same yourself.

Grace, mercy and peace be with you all through our Lord Jesus Christ. So prays

Your willing servant

in the Gospel of God,

W. H. S.S.

LETTER III.

TO W. H. S. S.

Bolney, Tuesday evening, Dec. 11.

ALAS! alas! my dear friend, my poor dear father is no more: he expired yesterday morning about a quarter before eleven of the clock. This to me, my dear friend, is one of the severest strokes that has ever befallen me since I have been in this world. But one thing at times assuages my grief, and in some measure composes my mind, which is this: I am sure that he departed out of this world in peace.

Poor dear man, I was one that sat up with him during the last night of his abode with us. When in the agonies of death he looked and smiled twice, and once he endeavoured to speak, and got out these words—*How beautiful!* Isaiah lii. 7. But he then dropped short; his strength was too far gone to say more. He expired without a struggle; and to his last moments there was peace, composure, and resignation, to be read in his very countenance. O, my dear friend, we have lost a most tender and affectionate father; and I think my poor sister and I are left almost alone in a sinful world. The cross of Christ is not ceased where

the power of God appears ; and I know that there are none around these parts that will care for us, except the poor despised few that favour the Lord's righteous cause. My aunts and my uncle are remarkably kind to us, and much lament the loss of my venerable parent. It is impossible for me to describe the grief and sorrow of my poor sister ; dismayed and cast down she is with a witness, and quite inconsolable. She said to me yesterday, " I think I have lost the only friend I have had in the world ;" adding, " There is another thing which distresses me above measure ; which is, that the Doctor, whom I sincerely love, feels his mind at a distance from me ; for he has not so much as mentioned my name in any one letter sent to my father or you since the beginning of his illness." I hope my dear friend will favour us with his acquaintance, his correspondence, and his summer visits, as long as it shall please God to spare your life. If you can find it in your heart, pray remember us in your petitions : For I am sure, if we were both destitute of faith in Christ, we could never bear up under this calamity which is now fallen upon us. It has been our most anxious desire, and earnest prayer to God, that our poor father might be spared a few years longer : but this request is not granted, this comfort is denied ; but we hope still to share in your prayers.

Pray, sir, excuse my writing so freely, for it is out of the abundance of my heart that my mouth
speaketh.

speakeeth. I should esteem it an unspeakable favour if you would drop us a few lines. Sometimes I thought that I would not write, for I could put down nothing in my paper but the grief and feelings of my heart: but I felt a secret persuasion that you would feel for us, and bear a part of our burthens. Excuse, my dear friend, what is amiss, and believe me to remain, with the highest esteem and regard,

Yours very affectionately,

E. B.

LETTER IV.

TO E. B——.

Cricklewood, Dec. 14, 1804.

My dear friend in the Lord Jesus Christ,

I HAVE now received what I fully expected, and what I knew before the coming of yours. For, when you sent me the first account of your father's illness, I spread the matter before the Lord in prayer, but felt a bar upon my heart, as I mentioned to you in my former letter. The Spirit of grace and supplication maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and always according to the will of God (Rom. viii. 26, 27), but never against it.

It is now many years since he and I set out for Bolney (post), and we left London about nine o'clock in the evening. On the road I was determined to pump his heart, and to draw out all that was in it.—*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.* Prov. xx. 5. I begun with him, and soon the spring appeared to rise, and to flow out rapidly.—

The

The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook. Prov. xviii. 4. After some time he stopped. I then asked another question, such as agreed with the chain of discourse, and off he went again, filled with love and heavenly joy. It was quite dark, so that he could not see my countenance, nor did I speak one word all the time he went on; but when he stopped, then I mentioned to him how this and the other passage of Scripture was fulfilled in this and in the other part of his experience; and then asked another question or two, agreeing with the end of the thread where he left off; and that set him going again, till I got him to the time when the Lord turned his captivity; and then his mouth was filled with laughter. Psal. cxxvi. 2.

He informed me of the soul-trouble which came gradually upon him; of his sinking deeper and deeper under it; of some friends of the Baptist persuasion getting hold of him, and persuading him of the goodness of his state, and how this lifted him up into vain and presumptuous confidence, until sin got the mastery of him, and the contraction of fresh guilt pulled him down again into all his former horrors and terrors. About this time a book of mine fell into his hands, which pointed out his presumptuous confidence, and helped forward his calamity, till he came over to Lewes to hear me: and after that his determination to speak

to me, and of his coming one evening to Mr. Jenkins's door where I was, but his heart failed him; so he returned and went home. Afterwards of his getting more of my writings, which encouraged him to hope, and of his coming up to Paddington to see and hear me; and of the Lord's blessing the reading of one of my pamphlets to him; and of God's shining into his heart (2 Cor. iv. 6) in one of the meadows at Gassons; at which time he kindly invited me to preach in his barn at Bolney; which I believe to be now about nine or ten years ago. From that night I found a heart-felt union with him, and was fully persuaded that he was fixed upon the foundation which God has laid in Zion. Isaiah xxviii. 16. Nor did that union ever dissolve, nor did I ever once doubt after that of the goodness of his state. He always stiled and acknowledged me his father in Christ. My coal-sack was no bar to his acknowledgment of this relationship: and, as he acknowledged me in part (2 Cor. i. 13, 14), so he acknowledged to the end; that the Gospel of Christ will do to die by as well as to live by, and give possession as well as profession.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Heb. xi. 1. Faith, in its different exercises, brings into the soul every needful grace from the Saviour's fulness; and the graces of the Spirit are called the first fruits.

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Rom. viii. 23. And the first fruits of the Spirit of grace are an earnest of the harvest of glory. Ephes. i. 14. It differs nothing in quality, but in quantity. Nor is there any one blessing promised, or one promise either of grace here or glory hereafter, but what faith embraces and hope expects. Hence the many confident claims, positive assertions, and firm expectations, left upon record by those *who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.* Heb. vi. 12. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory..* Ps. lxxiii. 24. *The elders which are among you I exhort, who also are an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.* 1 Pet. v. 1. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Luke ii. 29, 30. *O that my words were now writtten ! Oh that they were printed in a book ; that they were graven with an iron pen and laid in the rock for ever ! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth. And, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.* Job xxix. 22, 25. And the Apostle Paul also—*For I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,*

which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8. You see, by these few quotations how their faith grew and their hope abounded. They trod upon the heels of the promises, embraced with faith and affection what God promised to them, and called the glories of heaven their own before they received the inheritance.

On Tuesday last, the 11th of December, I set off from London early, and was at Crawley soon after nine o'clock, where I stopped to change horses; and, upon asking the waiter if any of their post-lads knew the way to Bolney, he replied, "Yes; you are going to Mr. Blaker's. He is dead." I replied, "Dead!" "Yes," said he, "he died yesterday; the doctor of this parish attended him." Being but poorly, and the cross-country roads not passable by carriage, I immediately returned, and breakfasted at Ryegate.

You never informed me, in any one of your letters, that your father expressed any desire to see me, nor was he, in the whole course of his illness, under any sharp soul-exercises, which require the elders of the church to pray over him, and to anoint him with fresh oil in the name of the Lord. James v. 14. The Almighty anointed him himself, and gave him according to his own promise, *the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit*

spirit of heaviness. Isai. lxi. 3. I guessed that your desire of my coming was in hopes that the united prayers of many might prevail with God to spare him a little longer; but I had early intimation that this would not be granted, and against faith and conscience none can prevail. It was not so with me when your mother was so ill as to be given over by the doctor for three months. I told you and your sister both, before I set out for Bolney, that I believed God would do more for her in answer to prayer, than by all the medicine she had taken; and you saw the truth of this in less than three days, and she is still alive. What faith credits, hope expects, and the promises of God are sure to both. There is not one of you that have any just ground to conclude that an eternal separation has now taken place between you and your father. The unity of faith, meeting and centering in Christ, makes us all one in him. The bond of peace is one in God's family, whether above or below. Love, which is the bond of all perfectness, is neither broken nor dissolved by death. It goes from God the Father, by the Holy Spirit, through Christ to all the family, and through the whole family itself, whether in grace or in glory. And for this Christ prayed.—*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us.* John xvii. 21. Some di-
vine

vine graces will not be exercised or wanted in the world to come ; as faith, which will not be wanted when we see as we are seen. Hope, when in full possession, we shall not want ; *for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ?* Rom. viii. 24. Patience, meekness, contrition, godly sorrow, and repentance ; these will not be wanted nor exercised in the world to come. But light, life, love, peace, rest, joy, and humility, will abide with us, and pass with us into the other world. Humility is ascribed to God himself (Psal. cxiii. 6.) and will be found and exercised by all the saints in heaven, as may be seen by their disclaiming any one good work done by them, even in a glorified state. *Lord, when saw we thee an hungry and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink ? &c.* Matt. xxv. 37. Seeing these bonds are not dissolved by death, it is to us an evident token of meeting again in Christ ; for all are one among themselves, and all are one in Christ the head. The same faith that dwelt in your father dwells also in you, and in the rest of the family. I have never yet seen a family, as far as I am able to judge, so highly favored of God as yours. *I will,* says God, *take you one of a city, and two of a family, or tribe, and I will bring you to Zion.* Jer. iii. 14. But to take a whole family is going out of his usual way. You are not destitute nor ignorant of the life and power of Godliness. You have confessed many experiences of it ; you have seen it in your father ;
and

and you have been both eye and ear witnesses of the end of his conversation ; and, if after all this any of you should turn apostates, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and for Lot's wife, in the day of judgment, than for you. But I hope better things of you, though I thus speak, and things that accompany salvation ; and subscribe myself ever yours to serve in Christ Jesus,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER

LETTER V.

TO THE REV. W. HUNTINGTON.

Dear Friend,

LAST Saturday, according to his desire, I accompanied our beloved friend and old companion to his long home, and was a witness of what remained here of him being laid in the earth. Dust to dust, and ashes to ashes, in a sure and most certain hope of his resurrection to eternal life. His departure was most glorious, and the leave we took of him most sweet and comfortable; but at the same time I could not help lamenting his loss, for I have not such a friend left behind him in all Suffex. *A faithful man who can find?* It seems Solomon found it a rare thing. His soul was kept in a most happy and comfortable frame, throughout his last illness, after his bands had been loosed; which he felt pretty strong when his illness began to come on, but did not continue long before the Almighty was pleased to shine into his soul; and from that time forth the light was brighter and brighter, so true is the word of the Lord, "The path of the just shall shine more and more unto the perfect day." He appeared not to have the least concern that gave him any pain or emotion for his loving family, and you well know how affectionately he loved them, which plainly shews that he had

had resigned them all to the care of his Redeemer. He had not only hope in his death, but he had likewise peace in his death, and he entered into peace, and now rests on his bed, and walks with God in his uprightness. Solid peace he had through his illness; quietness and a comfortable assurance to the last; and he breathed his soul forth into the hands of his Redeemer in prayer, for his lips were seen moving when he could speak no more.

He told Mrs. B—— one morning, a few days before his departure, "O! what has been the work of this last night!" said he. "What work, my dear," was her reply. "O," said he, "such glories have been revealed this night, that I shall never be able to utter in this world," and words to the same effect.

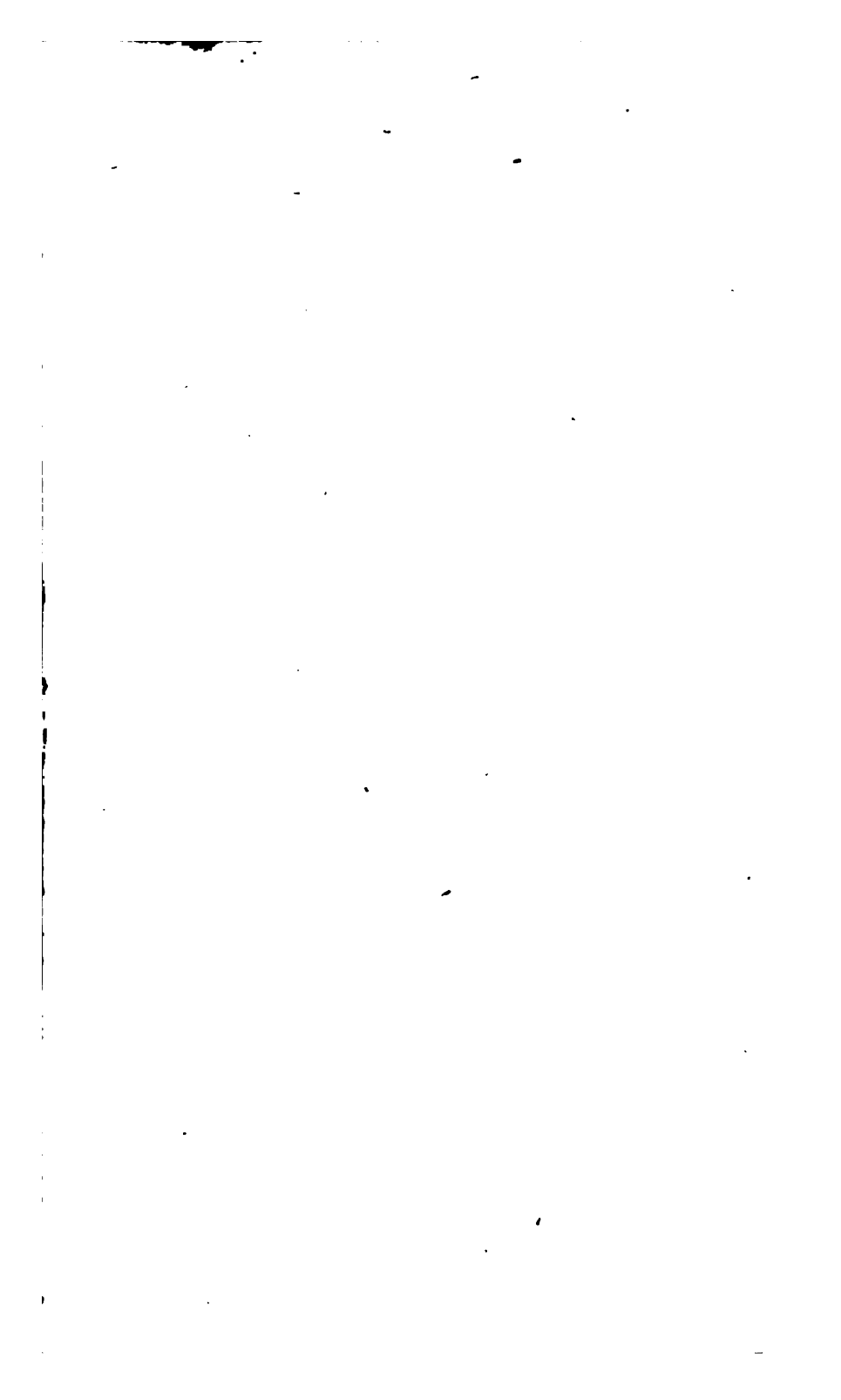
Truly the memory of the just is blessed! for I can neither talk or write of him but what I find a sweetness descending on my spirit. "O! that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my last end may be like his." And though, perhaps, there may be but few that come to the end so comfortable, yet I believe that precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of all his family. But, as most likely you will have more particulars by Betsy, I shall refrain saying any more. A young man at Lewes lately departed, and left a comfortable testimony after him. I believe these things have stirred the spirits of the contrary party, who make a fair shew in the flesh. They have published the death of two

or

or three in the newspapers, with a fullsome account of their departure. The visions^{one} had on his death-bed were published, and witnessed, but this will not do, for it is well known that they are of no credit among the spiritual. Nevertheless they acted a wise part, for they knew if they had published it in Zion, that the children there would not believe a word of it, therefore they put it in the newspaper, supposing their own brethren would not object to it; for of the world they are, and of the world they speak, and the world hear them. My hand is ready to freeze; God bless my dear friend, I hope he will soon favour me with a few lines, that I may know how he is this sharp weather. Peace be with you. Amen.

J. J.

FINIS.





— 40 —

The time of the singing of birds is come. Cant. ii. 12.

*The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons
and the owls. Isaiah. xliii. 20.*

(2)

A
CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

NOCTUA AURITA,

OF THE DESERT,

AND

PHILOMELA,

OF THE KING'S DALE.

PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S.S.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET,
AND AT MONKWELL-STREET MEETING.

The time of the singing of birds is come.—CANT. ii. 12.

The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls.—ISA. iv. 30.

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1799.



P R E F A C E.

BELOVED FRIEND,

HAVING seen and read most, if not all, the letters which have passed between you and my dear sister, it is my opinion that they would be of great use to many if they were made public. When I consider and reflect upon the light, support, and help, which I received when in my trouble from many of the Epistles of Faith, as well as from your other writings; and the many accounts I have since had of the usefulness of the Living Testimonies to many souls that were in distress, darkness, and bondage; it is my request, should it meet with your approbation, that you would publish them. I am fully persuaded that the matter they contain leads to the true and living way. The bulk of professors, in our day, as far as I am able
to

PREFACE.

to judge, are entire strangers to the path of regeneration. There are but a few who walk in the narrow path of life, and who experience the love of God therein; and fewer still who can cast up this way before others, and whose ministry is that of the Spirit, ~~and not of~~ the letter. And, as I believe there are some, in many dark corners of the country, ready to perish for lack of knowledge, who are seeking the truth, but, for want of some one to guide them, they are kept in ignorance of it, who knows but that Providence may send these letters (as I am certain, from my own knowledge, he has many of your other writings) into their hands, which, under God, may give them light on their state. I think there are in these letters some things new and singular. I feel a desire to see them in print. I have been acquainted with my friend now for some years. When I first knew her she stood very high in her confidence, such as it was; but, when the Almighty wounded me, and made me speak out of the abundance of my own heart, her confidence was soon sapped; and I believe she found her confidence had ever been in her own tabernacle; and, when it was rooted up, the King of terrors

laid

PREFACE:

laid hold of her, as he will one day of many who, like her, think themselves now very secure and strong. But the first-born of death will soon devour that sort of strength; and hunger-bitten they are already. I have been an eye-witness of her distress under the spirit of bondage, in which she continued two or three years; and likewise, as you well know, of her happy enlargement, which she enjoyed for a long time. And I have narrowly watched her descent from the mount of transfiguration. She has been now for some time in the furnace; and I believe in my heart she will endure the fire, and come forth as gold. At present she walks very steady, humble, meek, and lowly, and appears to quit herself like one that seeth him who is invisible. She is the first fruit of Achaia unto the Lord; at least she was the first that publicly returned to give glory to God; and she was a stranger; and cleansed she is I verily believe. And, as there are many professors now standing where she once stood, and others in darkness and distress through legal bondage, I am in hopes that making the letters public will be a means to awaken some of the former, and encourage the latter. That they may be a caution to some,

strength

PREFACE.

strength and encouragement to others, stir up jealousy in many, and be blessed to comfort the weak and infant race, is, in this request, the view, and, when published, will be the earnest wish and prayer of

Your truly sincere lover and friend,

VESPERTILIO TUMULIS.

PRELIMINARY

PRELIMINARY EPISTLES.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

BELOVED OF GOD,

MAY I not say, "Hail! highly favoured, blessed art thou among women, when he that is mighty hath done so great things for thee, in remembrance of his mercy, as he promised to our forefathers in the faith, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever?"

It is jubilee with thee; the days of the Son of man are come, days of good things. And would it not be commendable in thee to act the part of the poor lepers in the siege of Samaria; that is, to inform the King's household of it? Dost thou well to feast at the banquet thyself, and to go and hide all the rest? If the Lord forms a person for himself, it is that he may shew forth his praise.

The poor woman with her issue obtained virtue from the Covenant-Head privately, and was going to withdraw, in hope of escaping the cen-

sure and displeasure of the Jews. With the heart she believed unto righteousness. Thus God prepared her heart; but with the mouth we must make confession unto salvation. This was left undone till God created the fruit of her lips, and then she was called forth to make confession of her faith. By these means the word sounds out, which raises curiosity in some, desires in others, it encourages many, and provokes not a few to jealousy and emulation.

We must render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things which are God's. To smuggle foreign goods robs the prince of his revenue; and to hide the heavenly flame under a bushel robs God of his praise. "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." The nine were self-seekers, moved to pray for a temporal cure only; self-interest drove them to it, and base ingratitude kept them from acknowledging the cure; and, by this art of smuggling the benefit, they escaped the reproach of Christ, which Moses so highly esteemed, and did not lose their reputation among the scribes and pharisees. But, alas! these could have no faith; for "how can you believe (saith the Saviour) who receive honour one of another, and not the honour that cometh from God only?" We are to weep with them that weep, and re-
joice

joice with them that rejoice. I was in company with his excellency the Welsh ambassador at your groaning, when your bearing pains and birth throes were upon you ; and we both took a part of your burden ; and I am informed that you felt the spirit of heaviness get lighter upon you from that hour. But where is my part of the candle ? I travailed in birth again and again till Christ was formed in thee. And now this work is done ; but what account have I had of it ? and, therefore, how can I rejoice ? Ephraim is comforted ; but there is a promise of comfort to his mourners. And again : “ Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters : behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their ways and their doings, and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem ; and they shall comfort you when ye see their ways and their doings.” Ezek. xiv. 22. Where is my share of this promise ? This part of the price is withheld.

The comforts of hope, the testimony of a good conscience, and the pleasing accounts of God’s giving testimony to the word of his grace, is the promised reward of the labourers in the Lord’s vineyard, and is no small part of the penny a day. If I might intrude upon a little of thy time, I should be glad of some short account of thy calamity when we fell into company at the G—— ; and how thou camest into that deplorable state.

No small portion of furnace-work has fallen to my share. And, when I saw the anguish of thy soul, I never found myself more sensibly touched with the grief of any person: nor did I ever feel a fuller persuasion in my mind of any person's deliverance, nor more freedom and confidence to predict it, and in the strongest terms; and I plainly saw (at your departure) that neither Satan, infidelity, no, nor your carnal reason, could stand before it; so mightily grows the word of the Lord and prevails. I must confess that, when I heard of thy happy delivery under the ministry of my dearly beloved and most faithful brother in the Lord, I stood astonished at the goodness of God, and at the concurring providences which went before on thy behalf. One friend in our company could not settle his business to return to London with me till Saturday morning. Saturday is a day that I am never from my study, if I can possibly help it. One or two in company pressed me not a little to stay; and those at G—— most kindly invited me to come and visit them, where it pleased God that we were to meet with you, whom I never saw before to my knowledge. And surely God set before us an open door. Our mouths were wonderfully opened to you; and I think your heart was, in some measure, opened to us. And this greatly convinced me that my stay was of God; nor could conscience contradict it; nor was my cuse empty on the Lord's day following

following on account of it. The favour that I have to crave is, how the troubles came upon thee, and how long thou wast left to occupy business in those deep waters; and whether thou wast in a profession previous to those trials or not. Now, as I am engaged in the work of the Lord, and desirous of knowing the wonders that God does in the land, that I may bless him with thee, I hope thou wilt not take this liberty amiss, seeing thou art no more a stranger nor a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen of the saints, and of the household of God; and that thou mayest long enjoy the pleasures, privileges, and immunities, of that city, is the earnest prayer of,

Dear sister,

Thine affectionate brother in Christ Jesus,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE attempted, as the Lord has enabled me, to comply with your request, in giving you some particulars respecting the good work the Lord has been pleased to work in my soul under the ministry of his Majesty's herald now with us. I think it is more than three years ago that I first heard him preach a sermon from these words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." He gave such a description of the way that most professors entered into the fold, as quite astonished me. I could hardly credit it; but was not then left to contradict it; but I believed it could not touch me. I thought it did me some good, as it led my heart out in gratitude to God that he had not left me to make such an entrance, for I was just in the state of the Laodicean church, thought myself rich and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing; but knew not that I was poor and wretched, miserable, blind, and naked. Had he asked me, at that time, of my experience, I should have told

him that I had been on the mount of transfiguration with Peter, and in the third heaven with Paul.

I heard him for some time occasionally on sabbath-day evenings. But he asserted such strange things respecting the first work of the Spirit's operation on a sinner's heart, when he came to convince him of sin, as was point blank against my experience; therefore I thought I was a witness against him that he was wrong. His once asserting, that when the Spirit came to convict a sinner, and to convince him of unbelief, that such a soul could apply none of the promises of the gospel, this quite enraged me, and I declared I would never hear him preach another sermon. I therefore left his ministry for, I believe, two or three months; during which time I found a great deal of enmity work against him, and his ministry too. However, conscience was not altogether silent at this time; and I should at times have such thoughts as these, viz. Where does all this enmity spring from? It cannot be a fruit of the Spirit of God. However, these words of Paul used to set matters right at times: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." That I had the faith which is of the operation of God's Spirit, I believed no one that knew me doubted; but feeling this enmity rise high at times made me a little uneasy, and I thought I would hear him
again,

again, as he might be got more moderate. I had heard him but a few times before the Lord was pleased to strip me of all my supposed excellency. How true is that saying of the Psalmist, " When thou with thy rebukes correctest man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume like the moth." And so I found it. And I soon found the faith that I had so much boasted of to be nothing but bold presumption. God sent the killing commandment home to my conscience, which stirred up all the nest of uncleanness that lay hid in my heart before, and I could only view an angry God in a fiery law; and a dreadful sight it was to me; it made me, like Moses, to fear and quake. Here was no access to God. The flaming sword seemed to turn every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. Instead of faith, hope, joy, and peace, I felt my carnal mind was nothing but enmity against God. My heart was as hard as an adamant; my will was pregnant with nothing but stubbornness, perverseness, and rebellion; and, as to my affections, I knew not where they were; but I knew they were not fixed on God, where they ought to be. Pray I could not. I had no faith; and God's word declares that whatever is not of faith is sin; and that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. This made me almost distracted. Every sermon I heard from him cut and condemned me; and the more it did so, the more I was rivetted both to him and his preaching.

preaching. I longed for the return of the sabbath, that I might be tried and searched. I was now determined to leave the place I was joined to as a member, and attend his ministry on sabbath mornings, as what I heard at the old place my soul could not endure; it was like singing songs to a heavy heart. How my soul loathed that daubing with untempered mortar! that peace which was spoken to my soul when God had spoken no peace! Blessed, for ever blessed be the Lord, who has delivered me from that empty profession, from that snare of the fowler. It was indeed sovereign mercy that delivered me from falling into that ditch, where the blind are leading the blind; and I was as blind as any one that is left behind, and perhaps far more presumptuous. Pardon this digression, dear sir, for Christ's love had just touched the handle of the lock, which made me thus wander. But to return. I went on so, I think, about a year, groaning under this heavy burden. I could not unboosom myself fully to any one. I sometimes accidentally fell into the herald's company at the G —; and, as I wished much to have some conversation with him, I pressed him to favour me with a visit; and he said he would, which raised my expectation of having an opportunity to open my mind to him. But I believe it was a year after his first invitation before he came, which I assure you tried me not a little. The first time he called I could not persuade him to get off his horse.

horse. This distressed me much, and I concluded that no one cared for my soul, and so gave up all thoughts of ever having an opportunity of speaking to him, unless I went to him on purpose; and that I feared would be deemed too great a freedom; and, besides, I was afraid that I should not be able to make him to understand me, nor be able to point my case out so bad as it really was; and, should that be the case, I should be deprived of receiving a faithful sentence from his mouth. I believe he read my condemnation in my face, which used to make me tremble from head to foot. When I saw him come down from the pulpit stairs I thought he looked at me as if he wished I would never enter the chapel more. I think it was about a month after this, one sabbath morning, he had been cutting and condemning me till I thought I was almost in the bottomless pit. I could no longer refrain, and therefore went to him into the vestry. He received me kindly, and gave me liberty to tell him all I wished; and, to my great surprise, he told me he really believed the Lord had begun a work on my soul, and that the Spirit of God was leading me to a sight and sense of my state by nature, and giving me to see that without Christ I could do nothing. What I felt at hearing this I cannot express; it was like life from the dead. I did not lose my burden, but I felt a gleam of hope from this consideration, that, if it was the Lord's work, I was not beyond the reach

reach of mercy. I could, from this time, tell him my whole heart and soul without any reserve; and he was the only person to whom I could. And many words has he spoken to me in private which have helped me with a little help when I have thought I was near upon the borders of despair. He once preached from these words in Malachi: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall surely come, saith the Lord of Hosts." Under this sermon I seemed to have a glimpse of the person of Christ. I could not tell what it was then. I think it had some effect in attracting my affections, for I lost my burden for several days; and, though it was not attended with any appropriating faith, yet it produced a joy in my soul which I had not felt before. I nursed this frame till I lost it, and my burden returned heavier than ever. Yet I cannot help thinking but that was the season that Christ knit my affections to himself; and it was the only season of real joy that I ever experienced till the Lord was pleased to break my fetters. As I before observed, my burden got heavier; and I found worldly cares got such hold of my mind that I was bowed down under them. My memory could retain nothing but what was against me. If I attempted to read but a chapter in the Bible, my thoughts were like
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the fool's eyes, wandering to the ends of the earth. If I attended the word preached, it was the same. And, though I was taught, by bitter experience, something of the importance of the truths I heard, yet, if I attempted to pray, though I knew I must perish everlastingly if the Lord did not give me the things I felt my need of, yet here worldly cares would so crowd into my mind that I have forgot what I came to God for. This I thought was a black mark indeed; this made my burden intolerable. His ministry still cut me off in the matter of faith. He would describe all I felt; and sometimes, under the word, I would have a little gleam of light to see something of the Spirit's work, which would give me a little hope that I was in the footsteps of the flock. But he was sure not to leave the pulpit till he had positively asserted that in such a soul, under those feelings, there was faith; which was like striking me dead; for I was well convinced I was quite destitute of that precious grace; and these two passages of scripture were, to me, quite a confirmation of it. The first is the words of Christ himself, when he says to his disciples, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and it should be done." The mountain I conceived to be unbelief. The Saviour says the mustard seed is the least of all seeds; and I drew this inference from it—that, if I had the least degree of faith

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in my heart, I should not be held so fast under its power. The other passage is, what John says in one of his epistles :- " This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." But, with respect to my knowing any thing of this victory, my conscience bore witness that worldly cares so captivated my thoughts, that I could not keep them where I wished them to be for one minute. What it was which kept me from black despair I know not. All the hope I had was this: when I had a gleam of light to see that the path I was in had been trodden by many who had received pardon and peace in times past, then I thought perhaps God might save me. But then I knew not but that this hope might be cut off; and, should this take place, I must be lost for ever. And I lived in daily expectation that this would be the case. At times I should find my burden get lighter; at least, I should feel myself more insensible of it. Then I thought I was in a worse situation than before; and I fought for it as if it had been my chiefest treasure; though I knew, when I had it, it almost made me distracted. I laboured long under a sharp temptation, and was saying, like one of old, " I choose strangling rather than life." Any instrument of death I could not bear in my sight; and was afraid I should be left to be my own executioner. The Lord still held me up to the light, and to a sight of his justice and sovereignty; and I saw clearly that he would be
just

just if he condemned me, and would be glorified in doing it, for I had procured it all to myself; and that my mouth would be for ever stopped, for I was under a threefold condemnation—condemned by the law, condemned by the gospel, and by my own conscience. But here I felt it cut closest; the thoughts of being condemned by the gospel, which is in itself good news and glad tidings, and in which is revealed a Saviour, who I saw was every way sufficient and able to save me. But it all rested on the act of his sovereign will; and whether that act would be put forth in mercy or in justice, I knew not. Here all legal hopes are cut; no bottom in this dungeon. And this was the place where sovereign mercy took me up. About this time God, in his kind providence, sent you down to the King's dale. You were, by appointment, to spend a day at the G——, and I was invited to meet you there. My case, at that time, seemed to be desperate. I had been for some time in great fear of losing my rationality, and was sure it must take place, if God did not appear for me; and then I thought I should be left to curse and blaspheme all that was good. This cut me to the quick. I was truly miserable, and thought myself not fit for the society of any that feared the Lord. I thought, if they did but know my heart, they would spurn me, and especially such an old servant of the Lord as I conceived you to be; for which reason I had a deal of pro and con in my mind

mind that morning whether to go or not. I wanted to hear your conversation, and others whom I knew were to be there; and glad should I be could I have been shut in a closet for that purpose. However, I at last concluded to go, but with this resolution, that I would by no means whatever open my mouth. You were almost a stranger to me; I having never been in your company but once before, nor ever had any conversation with you. When I came I found you there, with several others, at dinner, and I was placed next to you. Even this circumstance made my heart ready to burst within me. O, thought I, did you but know what a wretch I am, you would not endure me so near you! I did try to hide my face with my bonnet as much as I could. But you had not sat many minutes at dinner before you related a circumstance of a woman who was brought under convictions by your ministry, and who at last was quite deprived of her rationality, and was put into a mad-house; and her husband said to you, "You always said it was the work of God on her soul; but what can you say now?" You said to him in answer, "And so I do now; and I believe, in God's time, she will be brought to her right mind." This account was, indeed, like fuel to that fiery temptation I was then under; and no sooner was the word out of your mouth, than my sensations were such as I cannot describe. I thought I even seemed as if I felt my senses going

from me. At this time, if I had had all the world given me, I could not have helped bursting into tears; they came indeed from the abundant grief of my heart. You observed me, and turned to me very quick, and said to me, "What do you weep for? Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." I answered, "If you knew my state, and what a wretch I am, you would not say so to me." You turned to me again, and said, "What do you cry for?" I made no answer, being determined, if possible, to keep my resolution. You repeated it several times, but could draw no more from me, till his Majesty's herald, who was present, said, "Sir, let her alone; perhaps she will tell you what the matter is by and by." You then left off noticing me, and related a circumstance of a young woman who for some time had attended your ministry, and who was brought into great distress of soul; one who, I found, frequently visited you; and that she came to you one day, and said, "I am come to visit you for the last time, as it is of no use; all is over with me; there is no hope for me, I am certainly lost; I have neither strength nor power left, and sink I must." You said to her, "Well, girl; I see now your strength is gone, and you are brought to the place of promised deliverance; the work of stripping is done, there is nothing left; and I shall soon see you again with a new song in your mouth." These are the words, as near as they are brought to my recollection

recollection at this time. She went from you, and I think, if I am not mistaken, it was but a few days after, as she was attending your ministry, that the Lord appeared for her, burst her bonds, and delivered her soul; and the next time you saw her she told you a better tale, as you had predicted. This account took off the edge of those feelings which were communicated by the other relation, as I thought I saw a near resemblance between her condition and mine. When you had related this, you turned to me again, and asked me the same question as before, to tell you what was the matter with me. I did then open my mouth, and told you it was on account of the hardness and rebellion I felt in my heart. You then ordered a glass of beer, and one for me, and said, "Come, you and I will drink together." You asked me what I would drink to you. I answered, "I can drink my kind love to you." You said, "Can you, from your heart?" I said, "Yes." You said, "What can you love me for? It must be for something of God which you find in me; for no soul can love me for God's sake, unless they are loved of God; for we are to be hated of all men for his name's sake." And you added, "As sure as the Lord liveth, so sure shall you and I sit down together in the kingdom of heaven." That you should speak in such positive language to me, was very strange; neither could I credit you then. You then entered into conversation with me, and told

me all my feelings, as if you had been privy to all that had passed in my heart for three years back; and even some particular things which I had been exercised with but a few days before, which I knew none could know but God and myself; and which I had not mentioned even to the King's herald; therefore I knew you could have no information of them from him. You came to me that day, as Christ came to the woman of Samaria, and told me all things that ever I did. And sent of God you was, I am well persuaded, by the blessed effects that followed. You had your commission from God to "strengthen the weak hands, and to confirm the feeble knees;" for my soul was refreshed; and I received a confidence at that time that God would appear for me; nor did I ever sink so low afterwards; and it was about a month after this that God was pleased to appear and deliver my soul. You said unto me, "You shall not die in the pit, for in the pit I know you are." I shall never forget this interview, nor the effects of it, as long as I have an existence.

When the Lord saw that my strength was gone, and that there was none shut up or left, then he graciously appeared for me, and made the ministry of his excellency, by which I was alarmed and pulled down, the means of bringing me forth into the light and liberty of the children of God. The sermon was preached from these words: "Thou hast chastened me fore, but thou hast not given me

me over unto death." The Lord wrought faith in my heart, by that discourse, to believe in the dear Redeemer; and faith brought such joy into my soul as a stranger intermeddleth not with. I could now say, with David, that God had turned my mourning into dancing, and had taken off my sackcloth; and girded me with gladness. And I really think, when I get to glory, that I shall sing the loudest of redeeming love and sovereign grace of any there. I must adopt, as my own, the language of Mr. Hart,

" That sinners, black as hell, by Christ
Are sav'd, I know full well;
For I his mercy have not mis'd,
And I'm as black as hell."

I have sent you more than I intended when I sat down to write. But I believe every fact was brought to my mind by that blessed Spirit under whose operations they were wrought in my soul. Therefore I did not think that I should do right if I suppressed any part. I hope the homely dress in which it appears will not obscure it, so as to make it unintelligible. I believe you will find it out, as you have travelled the same path before I was brought into it. I present it to you with this request, that I may have an interest in your prayers, that the Lord would perfect that which is still lacking in my faith, and continue to work in me to will and to do of his own good pleasure; that I

may be helped to deny self, and to take up the cross daily. And may the Lord long spare you to be useful in his vineyard, that you may daily see the fruit of your labours in espousing souls to Christ, which shall appear the crown of your joy and rejoicing in the great day, when you shall say, "Here am I and the children which thou hast given me." This is the humble and earnest prayer of

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

As I have heard that thou wast long in a profession before it pleased God, by the mouth of his herald, to pull thee down and renew thee, I should like (if it be not too great a favour) to know how that first work began. I know that God's work is perfect, and that nothing can be added to it, or taken from it; and that God doth it that men may fear before him. But sometimes the work hath small beginnings, and goes on almost imperceptibly, the impressions not being deep,

deep, as in Job and Hezekiah, who, after a long profession, were led into awful discoveries of their own depravity, and who afterwards were favoured with more conspicuous deliverances, and with brighter views of God's great salvation, and of their interest in it. I should like to know whether you had any fight or sense of the plague of your own heart, the natural hardness and impenitency of it, the infidelity, the rebellion, and carnal enmity of it; and if you were exercised with legal bondage, the wrath of God, and the terrors of a broken law; the fear of death, and the torments which attend it; all of which the saints in the Bible complain much about. And, indeed, how can those be made free who are insensible of their bonds, or those need the physician who are not sick? or those be reconciled who never felt their enmity? or those receive the love of God who have neither fear nor torment to cast out? No small number who stand high in their profession are ignorant of all these things; and sure I am that the office and appointment of Christ doth not reach them, for he was not sent to feed the full, to heal the whole, to support the strong, nor to call the righteous. He was sent to bind up the broken-hearted, to open the prison to those that were bound, &c. They tell us that they were drawn by love; but all that God loves he rebukes and chastens, and scourges every son whom he receiveth; and declares that those who

have no chastisement are bastards, and not sons.
A reply to this will greatly oblige,

Dear sister,

Your willing servant in Christ,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER
IN THE LORD JESUS,

I RECEIVED your kind epistle, and do most sincerely thank you for the same, and shall comply with your request, for I feel a pleasure in so doing; and should I give too much scope to my pen, I hope you will pardon it. To proceed. My parents being professors of religion, I was early brought to attend on the word preached, under the Rev. D—— B——. He being a Calvinist

Calvinist dissenter, (and I believe he preached the doctrines of the gospel clearly) I sat under him till I was in my twentieth year; but it was from constraint, and not out of any love to it. But during all these years I attained to no degree of knowledge of the doctrines I heard; and I believe that the heathens, who never saw a bible nor heard the word, could not be more blind and ignorant than I was.

But, at the end of this period of time, one Lord's day Mr. B—— preached from these words, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help." As he went on treating of the first part, I found my attention drawn to it, and saw that I was interested in the subject; and I do believe there never was a truer description given of the fall of man, as far as it could be conveyed from light received from the letter of the word, than he gave at that time: it made me tremble from head to foot. I believed the report; and clearly did he shew how fallen man was under the curse of the law, and, as such, obnoxious to the wrath of God; and conscience made the application by bearing this testimony, "Thou art the man." He then treated largely on free grace, and salvation by Christ, and shewed that it was only for sinners that Christ died, and that this salvation became ours by believing. I shall not enlarge on his sermon, but tell you that these last tidings made my very heart leap for joy. I
thought,

thought, yea I had not a doubt, but I was one of those that Christ died for, because I now saw myself a sinner. On this ground I commenced a believer; and I came from under the sermon with light on the whole plan of salvation, and as firm a confidence of my own personal interest therein as a poor creature could have. For two nights I could not close my eyes, my joys did rise so high; and all the free invitations and unconditional promises of the gospel kept flowing into my mind. I thought I was in a new world; the world was now nothing to me, and I wanted to die, that I might be out of it. I could not pay the least attention to any worldly affairs for three weeks. I once went to Mr. B——, and told him how his ministry had been blessed to me, and we rejoiced together; and my wonderful conversion was blazed abroad far and near. I sat under his ministry, I think, about six years.

My joys at length were not quite so high. After the time mentioned above they began to abate, which I thought to be strange; but I went to my father, and told him how it was with me, and he told me that all those who were walking in the ways of God found it so, and I should only maintain and keep my comfort in a way of religion. Indeed he was a good nurse to me, and very high I was in his esteem, but not more so than he was in mine. I had no small share of joy, at seasons, for the space of a year and an half. About this
time

time these words were brought suddenly to my mind, and that with power: "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." I was much perplexed at this, and thought what rod had I got to pass under? And I thought I was safe enough in the bond of the covenant already. However, about six months after this I was visited with severe afflictions, which so weakened my tabernacle, and the faculties of my soul, that at times I was incapable of thinking, contemplating, or any thing else. But this I conjectured to be the fulfilment of the first part of the foregoing promise which the Lord sent to me. From that time my joys declined; but my confidence still remained unshaken as to the reality of the work. At times I can recollect that there was something within me that would whisper that "all was not right at the bottom." But this voice was soon hushed and smothered, by being attributed to other causes, viz. the devil and the power of unbelief, which I was taught to resist. Indeed, I had so many to build me up in this my confidence, that it was no wonder I stood my ground; and I had as high an opinion of myself as others had of me, which only fed my pride. Having sat under the aforesaid instrument about six years, he left his charge to take another; and in his stead came the Rev. G——T——. He was (to my view) as sound in the doctrines of the gospel as the other, and I much approved

approved of his ministry, and sat under it, I think, about four years. At this time I married, and Providence fixed my habitation in this place, where I sat under the ministry of J—— M——, and was much delighted with the same; as he was not inferior to him I left. After some time I heard that Mr. Jenkins preached in a very singular way; but, as I heard he preached the doctrines of the gospel, I thought I would go and hear him; for I assure you from these I never deviated in judgment, for all my religion lay in the belief of them. But I now know that my religion would not stand the fiery test. But sure, if it had been God's genuine work, it could not have been overthrown; for what he does is done for ever. But a stormy wind has rent this wall; and when it fell there was not left so much as one stone upon another that was not thrown down. O Sir! to think how many that are called shepherds, and whole flocks under them, are resting short of the things that accompany salvation, is a sore trial to me. But I must leave this part of the Saviour's government with him who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working; but cannot get rid of my feelings for those who are so near to me. Adieu; and may God reward your kindness to the chiefest of all sinners. So prays

Yours in the hope of the gospel,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

To

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST,

Yours came safe to hand; and I have considered it, and I will by no means say that the Lord God of Israel had no hand in the work described in your narrative. But this I must confess, that evangelical repentance, which to my view is essential to salvation, is not in the account. The new wine was put into an old bottle; and, where this is the case, pride will burst the bottle, and the wine will run out, and the old bottle must perish. I mean, that your joys were not received into an humble, broken, and contrite heart. God hath promised to give us a new heart; as well as a new spirit; and, when the new wine is put into a new bottle, both are preserved. However, the stony heart shall be taken away, and it shall be destroyed, as well as the other parts of the body of sins, for our old man was crucified with Christ; and, under the operation of the Spirit's renewing power, the body of sins shall be put off.

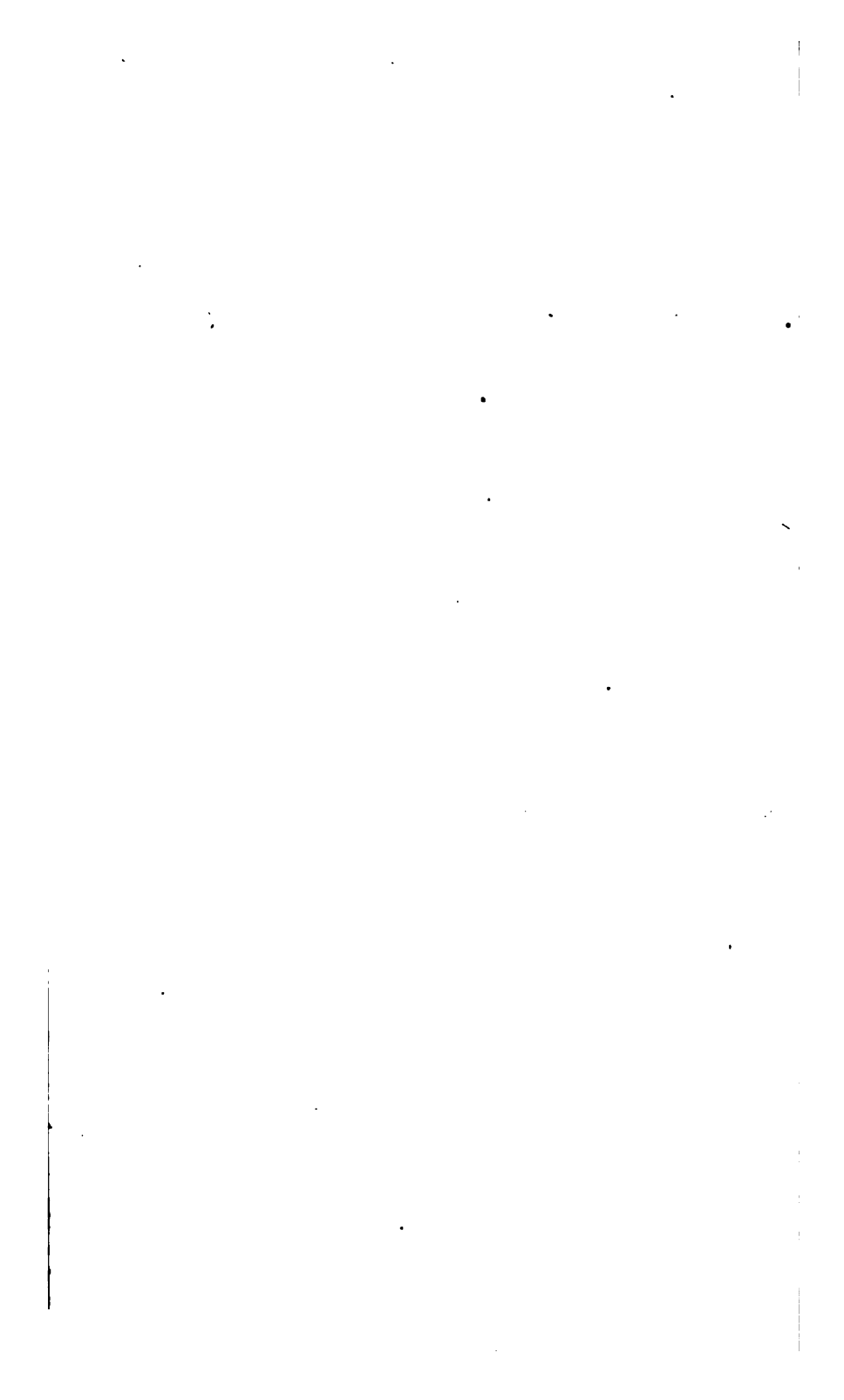
Repentance is two-fold, legal and evangelical. The former is extorted by fears, terror, and torment, and is always attended with hard thoughts of God, and self-pity. This is all the repentance
that

God is smiting us with terrors, horrors, flashes of divine anger, reproofs, rebukes, the lashes of conscience, bitter reflections, and smiting us with the application of the threatenings and sentences of a broken law, and with the sore buffetings of Satan, and the killing stings and remorses of guilt. To come into the bond of the covenant is to have the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. The work on you seems to me to be very much like that of Hezekiah, much joy and confidence. And no wonder; for at that time he knew nothing of the plague of his own heart; but, when God shewed him this, his joy, confidence, and hopes, all sunk together: "I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world: he will cut me off with pining sickness; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me." Isa. xxxviii. 11, 12. And, indeed, nothing will hide pride from our eyes but an abiding sense of our own depravity, and of the superabounding and undeserved mercy of God in Christ Jesus to us. May this religion ever rest with thee and me. So prays

Thy friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

NOCTUA AURITA.

The Desert.



A CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER I.

To PHILOMELA, on the Spray, Mount Tabor.

THE long, cold, dreary winter of my beloved sister in God is past; the dismal cloud of mount Sinai, which hath long rained its entangling snares on thy soul, is now over and gone; the hiding place from the impending storms, and the covert from the dreadful tempest, is found at last; "being wet with the showers of the mountains, she hath embraced the rock for want of a shelter." "He was angry with me," says Philomela; "but his anger is turned away, and he comforts me." "In his favour is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

"The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Israel buds and blossoms as the rose; the lilies of the valley ap-

B

pear

pear among the thorns; those that have long lain, self-condemned, among the pots and potsherds of the earth, obtain the wings of a dove, and their feathers shine with burnished gold, while the voice of the turtle bemoans his mate. "Nor will he deliver the soul of his turtle dove unto the multitude of the wicked, nor forget the congregation of his poor for ever." Psalm lxxiv. 19. Two turtle doves were always offered together under the old dispensation; but one was never offered alone. Jesus died not alone; we were crucified with him. How precious is the sacrifice of a crucified Saviour to poor perishing sinners! and how precious is the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart to Christ Jesus! These were both offered up, and they will ever go together; as in type, so in truth. The voice of the heavenly turtle is heard and understood; and his approving and commanding voice to his mate is, "O my dove, that art in the cleft of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs! Let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Love in the heart ravishes him, and truth on the tongue charms his blessed ears; while a cheerful countenance, reflected from a joyful conscience, carries all before it, and holds him a willing and a joyful captive to the charms of a mortal's affections: "The King is held in the galleries." How humbling, how condescending, is the King of kings, and
 Lord

Lord of lords, to bow the heavens and come down to manifest himself, and pay his divine visits to rebels, to criminals in chains, who are shut up in unbelief, in legal bondage, and in the strong holds of sin and Satan ! But he comes ; and “ his reward is with him, and his work before him.” He enters and takes possession of the purchase of his own blood, and rejoices over the trophy of his own victory ; separates the objects of his choice from among the rest of the captives, and espouses the foreigner. What a brilliant train of glory, majesty, and power, attend him when the everlasting doors are lifted up, and the King of glory enters in ! Then we bow to his sceptre, submit to his easy yoke, embrace the heavenly proclamation, and, with joy unspeakable, come over to the divine standard ; while the banner, that he has given to them that fear him, is displayed, that his beloved may be delivered from that fear and torment that is more bitter than death. How wonderful are his works to the children of men ! The clay lies passive in the hand of the potter, while he forms the broken pitcher into another vessel, as it seemeth good unto the potter to make it. He enlightens the understanding to behold his beauty, suitableness, and worth ; he renews the mind, writes the law of faith in it, and entertains it with heavenly things ; he binds up the broken heart, and sheds abroad his love in it ; he purges the conscience, and endows it with

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everlasting

everlasting peace, and the witness of our adoption; he informs the judgment, and inclines the will to choose, embrace, and hold fast, the better part, that cannot be taken from us. Truth, in the love of it, flows in, and the promises flow in with their richest blessings, in all their sweetness, power, love, and joy unspeakable; while the blessed and adorable Comforter opens them up, explains them, and applies them as nails fastened by the Master of assemblies. He also helps our infirmities in prayer, testifies of Jesus, and of our interest in him, and fills both heart and mouth with a thousand thanks, blessings, and praises. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."

O could we continue in this mount without the company of Moses and Elias! This would be heaven on earth. But, alas! how often is this sweet enjoyment of his company interrupted. So fearful is the soul of offending, lest he should awake and depart; what weeping, praying, cleaving, and struggling to hold fast, when he is about to withdraw; and what tormenting anxiety, when gone, for fear he should return no more! Then comes that wicked counsellor, that enemy of all righteousness, with a "Where is now thy God?" But he returns again and again, according to his appointed times of life, and revives and renews his visits and his work, saying, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will
I gather

I gather thee ; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer." So speaks the great Jehovah ; so sings Philomela ; so I must subscribe.

But the arch enemy will lay many traps for thee in thy new and glorious connexion, in thine exalted state, and in the happy enjoyment of that dignity to which thou art so unexpectedly preferred. And, as thou hast been so long habituated to the legal embraces of Moses, thou wilt find a self-righteous spirit within, that will at all times bend thee that way ; and there will be a cleaving to him, notwithstanding all the hard treatment thou hast met with from him. His first wife was a Cushite, or Ethiopian ; and all are black, but none comely, to this day, that are wedded to him. Contending, finding fault, cursing, and accusing, are all that can be expected by those who sue not out a divorce from him. His embraces gender nothing but bondage to fear ; and all conception by him is followed with endless soul-travail and fruitless labour ; and the whole issue is " fruit unto death," and nothing else.

No wedding garment, no ring, no beautiful feet with shoes, ornament those who abide by the side of that husband. " A bloody husband art thou unto me," says the Cushite, " because of the circumcision." Then she is sent back ; and how long she remained in widowhood I know not.

However, her father brought her to him again in the wilderness; for I do not read that he ever went after her himself; and what became of her afterwards, none know. I think he starved her to death: for Moses gave them not the true bread from heaven; they ate manna, and are dead. John vi. 32, 49. And I think that he hath starved all the wives that he hath had since; and, if at any time he gets a little comfort in his own heart, which makes him appear with a bright and cheerful countenance, he is sure to put a veil over his face, that nobody may look to the end of it but himself. 2 Cor. iii. 13. There is no such thing as living with him, nor with any of his family. What a life had our poor venerable mother Sarah all the time that Hagar was in her tent! She wanted to be the princess, though she was in bonds; and expected that her spurious son would have been heir both of the promises and of the homestead, till, by an order from the higher powers, they were both banished from the pavilion, which was to be inhabited by the legitimate offspring of the free woman. But, notwithstanding all that I have said, thou wilt get into these legal embraces, veiled, blinded, bound, straitened, barren, lifeless, peevish, fretful, rebellious, hardened; yea, and thou wilt even cleave to these things, as soon as ever the best Beloved hides his face, withdraws, and provokes thee to jealousy, in order to try thy love, thy faithfulness, and thine attachment to him; not that he
may

may know how thou wilt behave, but that thou mayest know what he hath done for thee; and that, by his going and coming, by his absence and his presence, thou mayest come to a more perfect knowledge of him, and at a more familiar acquaintance with him. At his departure the old man will shew his head; and when the Lord visits thee he will creep into his holes; for he is truly a night-bird. He cannot endure the light, nor shew his head where divine consolations abound. But, as soon as ever the good man takes his bag of money with him, and withdraws from his spouse, then the owls, bats, and evening wolves, creep forth; but, when the sun arises, they lay themselves down in their dens. At such times we must pray, watch, wait, and look, even "from the lion's dens, and from the mountains of the leopards;" for at these seasons the legal spirit works in a very unobserved way. The soul sensibly feels its loss; its love, joy, and comfort, abated. Consequently it doth not perceive the Lord, as usual, working in it both to will and to do. What is it then? Why, if he be not working in us, we must work for him. Then corruptions rise up, and interrupt us in the performance of our task. At this anger rises; then conscience accuses; then unbelief prevails, and hardness of heart and rebellion follow; and the wrath and the bondage of the law come on, and hold fast; and now we are discontented, and fret at every thing, even against

the Lord himself. The more discontented we are, in our deserted state, the more we strive, being driven with a hasty spirit; and the more we strive, the faster we are bound; till the light of his blessed countenance darts another healing ray, and the voice of peace rebukes and becalms the storm. Then the Lord returns with double love, and we dissolve in double gratitude. Now Moses holds his peace, and is content. The lion sculks off to his thicket, and the old man faints and dies once more, while we look to the cross. The nails pierce him, the spear lays at him, the cancelled debt-book silences him, and God, shining reconciled in the face of Christ, banishes him. Our old man is crucified with him: but crucifixion is a long lingering death, and the old man dies hard. He is of the same lineage, and in the same state, as the devil his father; both are condemned, both cursed, both are destroyed; and yet both are in being, and we know it to our sorrow. God was with Judah, and they drove the Canaanites out of the mountains; but they could not drive them out of the vallies, because they had chariots of iron. To keep them out of the mind and affections is a great thing; but to root them out of the heart is a work not to be done till we engage the last enemy; I mean death: for, though there is no discharge from that war, yet there will be a full discharge when that war is over; and then there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house

house of the Lord of hosts. This encounter completes the victory, and the crown awaits the conquerors. Sin and death entered the first paradise, but both shall be debarred the second. The first Adam let them in, and the last Adam shall drive them out. O long looked-for, blessed, and happy day, when and where the inhabitants shall no more say, " I am sick ! " Where " sorrow and fighting shall flee away." Where we shall see the lustre of a million suns, who shall shine on us, and shine through us, and with all his fulness satisfy us, and that for ever and ever. So prays

Thy ready servitor

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER II.

To NOCTUA AURITA, of the Desert.

I RECEIVED your very kind letter ; and may the Lord reward your labour of love to me, one of the most unworthy creatures that ever the Lord condescended to work upon. All that you tell me, concerning what are the effects of cleaving

cleaving to Moses, I have found in my own experience, in the course of two months before my journey to Gaffon's Bower. It is a mystery to me how I got there. But the Lord blessed the conversation I had with you the morning we all walked in the fields together, and gave me light to see how I was entangled; and I believe Satan will never bring me into that snare again. He must come in a different way the next time, if ever he gets me there again; which God in his mercy prevent! However, I am not at that mount now, and dread the thoughts of ever going there again. I know the Lord sent you to Gaffon's Bower, and me too. It was a happy season to my soul, for the Lord was with us. If you recollect, I told you a dream I had had, which I was sure was from the Lord. What was most remarkable in the dream, the sabbath-day's portion, that you said to me (in my dream) I should enjoy; and I dreamt that you tried to encourage and to comfort me under the sore trial I was then in. It was above ten days before you came down that I had the dream. I knew I had lost what was dearer to me than all the world; I mean that nearness to God, and communion with him, which I had once enjoyed. But the other part of my dream was something I was expecting the enjoyment of; and my expectation has not been cut off, as you will see by what I will relate to you. I had not set out on my journey to Gaffon's Bower one hour
7 before

before I felt such a spirit of uniting love flow into my heart to those that were with me, and to those I expected to meet, as I have not words to express; and your sermon that evening in the barn was a seal and confirmation of all that I had felt. It was the new commandment indeed, written with the finger of God on my heart. And, as I said before, a happy season I had. Moses' bands began to burst, for I could be holden no longer with them; and from Elijah's cave in the wilderness I was brought, and God has put me into the cleft of the rock, the sweet place you told me of. I find it is a sweet place; for he is making all his goodness to pass before me, and proclaiming his name to be merciful and gracious, &c.: and what I now enjoy can be nothing less than an earnest of that rest in endless glory which the sabbath-day is a type of. And therefore the words which you told me in my dream are fulfilled; for I do enjoy "a sabbath-day's portion." The Lord is pouring down such a blessing, that there is not room to receive it. I want my coast enlarged. Jabez prayed for it, and had it; and, my dear friend, do ask it for me; for I must be enlarged, or die under it, and that God knows. Surely this is singing in the heights of Zion, and feeding on the high places. I hope the Lord will never remove me from this cleft of the rock till he takes down this clay tabernacle, which I feel to be such a clog as I never felt it before. What I enjoy is something

thing more than faith and hope, though these abide; but it is the greatest of all, which is charity, or love. But, though it is thus with me, I know that Satan is very near to me, and would deprive me of all, if he could. I feel such fiery darts from him, at times, as I have never experienced before. But he is not permitted to hurt me. Christ was manifested in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil. I did grieve sadly at something you said in your letter; it was this: your saying I should be at the old work of cleaving to Moses again and again. But I shall certainly die to him and his law; and that has been predicted to me in another dream, which I had the night before last. It was this:—I dreamed I was from home in a friend's house. A person came in to me, and told me I was dead, and wanted me to go with him to see my corpse, which was at a house a little distance off. I was moved with indignation against him, and told him I was heartily glad I was dead, for I had plague enough of myself all my life-time, and would not move one step to view my own corpse; and that any body might have the trouble of my funeral that pleased. Perhaps this will be fulfilled when I can say, with Paul, "I, through the law, am dead to the law." Pardon my troubling you so much about dreams; for, when I write to you, I cannot write only what I feel. I hope we shall see you soon. I have every indulgence

gence heart can wish ; I mean that of attending on his Majesty's heralds, whose glorious orations are remarkably blessed to me. Surely " the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage." I assure you, when we all get together we talk much about you. I know we all feel much soul union to you. Pray remember our little sister Moorhen ; you know she has no breasts. She has received your kind epistle, and thanks you for it ; but she wonders how you found out her case, as she never has told you. I must now conclude, hoping to hear from you soon ; and believe me to remain

Your very sincere and affectionate

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER III.

To PHILOMELA, of the King's Dale.

I HAVE just received mine own with usury. The bee found its way to my hive with wax on its legs, and honey in its bag. The promised land still flows with this delicious fare. Eat as much of it as doth thee good ; for such is
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the knowledge of wisdom when it enters the heart; " then there shall be a reward, and thine expectation shall not be cut off." I am a tenant at will; and every little wind that shakes the cottage I am ready to take as a warning to quit, which will hasten my arrival at the better house " not made with hands." And I am the more inclined to entertain such thoughts, as our Israel at large begin to loath the manna, calling the weightier matters light food. For such conduct the divine repentment may justly appear; yea, and will appear, to send " a famine in the land, and cleanness of teeth throughout all their tribes." The numberless clouds without rain, which are blowed to and fro with every wind, throughout all our coasts, are certain preludes to this evil arrow; for " they will make empty the soul of the hungry, and cause the drink of the thirsty to fail." But even this shall not deprive me of my crown, nor screen their backs from God's scourge. How light are these bodily afflictions when the dying love of Jesus affords to the weary mind a downy pillow! " I will keep that man in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me." This is making all our bed easy in our sickness, and is the sweetest rest to the soul on the bed of languishing.

It is true the eye of faith, in the rays of the Morning Star, perceives the day-dawn and day-spring from on high inclined to visit; and the soul struggles hard to quit the dark and gloomy regions

regions of death's shadow. As the radiance of immortal glory spreads, the more precious is it for the eye of faith to behold the sun. This is seeing Him who is invisible to all the sight of mortals, or to all the light of nature. The goodness of Jehovah appears in the land of the living; faith perceives it, and draws her unerring conclusion to the enlightened mind, that "he is the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." The heavenly dawn shines upon obscure prophecy, and illumines that dark place, and brings divine harmony to light, where carnal reason had bred the worst confusion. Confidence puts her hand on divine veracity, and waits till faithfulness makes the promise good. And here the soul faints unless she believes. But the heavenly dove flutters in the heart, broods over the soul, and produces hope and expectation, which are both the soul's anchor and looker-out: the former stays her from sinking in her fainting fits, and the other fills her with anxiety till the desire is accomplished. Thus faith sees the promised object at a distance, and a divine impulse on the will bends it to make the choice, until the immortal seed of electing and everlasting love is shed abroad in the heart by the promised Comforter; and then the affections are all called forth to acquiesce in and to admire the choice. Now the Ancient of Days, and the child whose age is an hand-breadth, are no more at a distance. The Sun of Righteousness and the worm

worm of the dust meet together, without any danger of being scorched or dried up. He presents his suffering nature to view, and shines through it; darkness passes, and the true light shines; while the eye sees, the ear hears, and faith feels the word of life. O how melting, how humbling, how soul and self-debasing, is the vision! And, when it speaks in the court of conscience, then "the just shall live by faith." There is no more spirit left; all, all is drunk up, and crucifixion takes place; fellowship in his sufferings, and being planted together in the likeness of his death, is both felt and understood; and the effect is, the world becomes crucified in the vision, and the sinner is crucified to the world. This is manifesting himself on earth to the objects given him; and, when he awakes, arises, and ascends again, he takes the heart, the affections, the thoughts, the desires, wishes, appetites, and all the powers of the soul, with him, and leaves us as mere shadows without substance, machines without wheels, or as automaton figures. We may speak, and that is all; and sometimes not that. Whether in the body or out of the body we cannot tell; God knoweth. The match is made, the knot is tied, and Philomela is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord my God. The bond of the covenant has encompassed her; and all that he loves must live; for the true light always conveys dying love, which is his healing beams. All light,
unattended

unattended with this, is short of the saving health promised to all nations ; for there is neither salvation, health, nor life, in it. Bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and one spirit with him, and complete in him, and without fault before the throne ; these are great mysteries. But I speak concerning my master and mistress, whose willing servant I hope ever to remain. Signed and delivered

From the Desert.

· NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER IV.

To NOCTUA AURITA, of the Desert.

I RECEIVED yours, and my heart rejoiced when I saw the hand-writing. I know the Lord will reward you for your labour of love to my soul. It grieved me much to find you was laid by from your work. I hope ere this you are about again ; for I verily believe the Lord will not keep you a prisoner long, because, under him, there are so many that are looking to you for food, and there are so few under shepherds to feed them. Last week the Lord was pleased to visit my taber-

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nacle

nacle with a disorder which I had some apprehension would have taken me home. But he has brought me back again; for what end I am at a loss to know. I want to be gone. I know there is a mansion prepared for me, and that nothing shall ever separate me from his presence, who is the life and joy of my soul. I know now what you meant in the first letter you sent me, after my fetters were broken off. It has much puzzled me till lately. You said that *faith* was come to me by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and that faith would shortly work by love; and that love would cast out all fear and torment, and then the match would take place. Indeed I find it so; for I very sensibly feel the effects of union to Christ. Well might the apostle break out in wonder, and say, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." But we shall know more of it when, as you observe, we shall see the lustre of a million suns, which will smile on us, burn in us, and shine through us, for evermore. These expressions, as it were, set my soul on fire. But these words come to my mind, where the apostle says, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may inherit the promises." And I believe no soul ever needed patience more than myself. I find you will not let me enjoy my sweet morsel without the "bitter herbs;" you must bring to my remembrance

membrance " the wormwood and the gall " my soul felt under Moses' yoke. I verily believe that such a man as you can certainly divine ; and therefore do believe what you say. But I am not there yet ; no, I am in the banqueting-house, and his banner over me is love. I assure you my mortal part can hardly support under it. I know my body is much weakened, which is the reason, I think, that the Lord will not keep me here long ; for I seem to live entirely above. I have enjoyed much satisfaction in the company of the citizen who was lately at the vicarage. I feel union of heart with him. He seems truly contrite. I pray the Lord to appear for him, and heal the breaches which are made in his spirit, and restore to him health and cure. I hope we shall see you ere long in the King's dale. Your kind expressions of love in Christ Jesus towards us I really believe, for you have shewn it ; and I am sure that the same bond holds us to each other that holds us to Christ our head. His Majesty's herald, I believe, is well. My soul was sweetly fed yesterday under his excellent oration. I wished him to continue his sound till midnight. I believe I should not have fallen down with sleep. He brought forth milk and strong meat, that each might have a portion in due season. I really think he has had much of the power and presence of God with him ever since the meeting of our solemn assembly in the *barn* and the *bower*. Every time the Lord sends

you among us you confirm and strengthen the work on our souls done by the King's herald. So you see that self-interest is one motive of our wishing to see you. However, I believe one may say for many, that we love you dearly in the Lord Jesus as you do us. I should be glad to hear from you as soon as convenient. My other half desires to be kindly remembered to you. Must conclude, and remain

Your affectionate friend and sister

in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER V.

To PHILOMELA, of the King's Dale.

BELoved of God, thine epistle came safe to hand. The tidings are good; and God appears faithful, true, good, gracious, merciful, loving, kind, and tender; mindful of his covenant, and pitiful to self-lost, self-condemned,
and

and self-despairing sinners. The bitterness of death is past, the sackcloth is put off, and the best robe is put on. He hath loosed "the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." The strong hold of Satan is demolished, the prison of unbelief has yielded up its prisoner of hope, and she that sat in darkness shews herself. Wonderful is the resurrection of the soul under the Spirit's quickening and comforting operations. When a sense of divine wrath, the intolerable burden of guilt, the spirit of heaviness, begin to be removed from off the soul; when despondency, dejection, and terrible apprehensions, begin to subside; the mind sweetly ascends, and every captivated and enraptured thought ascend with it. Attracting love from above draws the affections to the right hand of the Majesty on high; while faith deals with dying love and all-atoning blood, hope casts her anchor within the veil; when charity casts out every let and hindrance, together with every rival, and paves the way for the best Beloved to yield to an undissolved union, to knit the marriage knot, and become one spirit with the dear-bought soul. O wonder of wonders! Adieu.

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA:

LETTER VI.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I HAVE not words to express my thankfulness for the favours you are heaping upon me. My debt is increasing, and I have nothing to pay. But I do verily believe that my dear Redeemer will give you a full reward. Blessed be his name, he does give me a heart to pray for it; "and he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, according to the will of God." Your letter came as a broad seal to all that I had experienced from the Monday till Thursday evening in the week following, when I received yours. During those days my union to Christ was made as clear to me as ever I saw the sun at noon-day. What I felt in my soul of the effects of dying love no tongue nor pen can ever express. The godly sorrow it produced in my heart melted it. The Lord did give me to look on him whom I had pierced, and mourn; and this dissolved my stony heart, and broke it in a thousand pieces. The three verses of Mr. Hart's hymn on the Prodigal quite overcame me, viz.

The

The prodigal's return'd,
 Th' apostate bold and base,
 Who all his Father's counsels spurn'd,
 And long abus'd his grace.

What treatment since he came?
 Love tenderly express'd.
 What robe is brought to hide his shame?
 The best, the very best.

Rich food the servants bring,
 Sweet music charms his ears:
 See what a beautiful costly ring
 The beggar's finger wears.

My joy and godly sorrow kept increasing; and on Tuesday following it rose so high, that I was incapable of attending to the domestic concerns of my family. I could only go about the house saying, "Lord, I cannot live so; I cannot, cannot. Do take me. Thou knowest I cannot bear up under such manifestations of dying love." Surely I was drunk with the new wine of the kingdom. The Lord did make me so to drink as to forget my poverty, and to remember my misery no more. Surely the Lord is preparing me for something; but what I know not. However, I am persuaded I shall not be led in this way long; but am quite in the dark what will be my path next. I think he is either preparing me for glory, or I shall be exercised with some fiery trial. However, what I experienced this last month I believe no temptation that I shall be exercised with will ever erase

it from my mind. I know now that Christ is mine, and that nothing shall ever separate me from him. I am saying with the spouse, "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved unto me; he shall lie all night between my breasts." I am truly glad to hear, by a friend, that you are better, and able to follow the plough. May the Lord crown your labours with success, that the fallow ground of sinners' hearts may be prepared for the reception of the precious seed, that the incarnate Word may be formed in many hearts! I shall be happy to see you. I hope it will not be long before I have that pleasure. I saw the King's herald last night: he was well. I believe he rejoices to see my happiness. May the Lord bless and prosper him! The power that came down upon us at Gaffon's Bower seems still to remain, both with him and us. Surely that was a time never to be forgotten. Our dear sister Moorhen begs me to present her kind love to you, and she thanks you for your kind letter; but says you give her too much encouragement, and she is afraid she shall never be able to write to you again; but desires me not to forget to tell you that she loves you dearly for the work of God upon you. I think we may say of her, as Christ said of Nathanael when he saw him coming to him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" My very soul cleaves to her. Precious she is to me, and dear to the Lord, I have no doubt. I shall be happy to hear from you as soon

soon as convenient. I hope the Shunamite's continually coming will not weary you. Let me continue to have an interest in your prayers. I believe I never stood in more need of them; for I think that Satan is enraged at me, and perhaps is laying some snare for my feet. Pray that the Lord would give me wisdom, that I may not be ignorant of his devices. My paper tells me to leave off. Believe me ever to remain

Your very sincere and affectionate friend

and sister in the bonds of the gospel,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER VII.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

THY favourable, unctuous, and rapturous epistle is safely arrived. Nothing now (since the operations of her late banquet on dying love, and her godly sorrow, and her kind reception) seems to be wanting to complete the glorious

rious work of conversion, regeneration, and espousing to Christ. Her eyes have seen that Just One; and she has wept the tears of heavenly love over him in his dolorous sufferings, which hath been attended with a most joyful and assured sense of pacification; and the blessed effects were self-loathing, and such self-abhorrence as is not to be described. This is a secret which is peculiar to the elect of God, when the eternal union between Christ and the espoused soul takes place; and is what no hypocrite ever attained, and what no minister of the letter could ever describe. Nothing now seems to be lacking in my dear sister's faith; she comes behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Son of God. She comprehends, with all saints that have gone before, both the height and depth of boundless love, which passeth knowledge. ~~The Lord hath~~ given her his sure tokens, and the things that accompany salvation; so that in all things she hath proved herself clear in this great matter. Henceforth there can be no enchantment against Philomela; no divination against this daughter of Abraham. I certainly shall, according to my first prediction, see her in the kingdom of God above. This soul-dissolving union, this fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, and being made conformable unto his death ~~in~~ it, is the most noble, the most soul-enriching and soul-establishing work of the holy Spirit of promise; and the sensations of the soul under it

produces the choicest experience that ever raised a soul to hope. It sifts things to the bottom, and brings all things, yea even life and immortality itself, to light in the soul. The poor sinner appears in all his worst colours, and Jesus the fairest among ten thousand. Not an angel in heaven was ever favoured with such a view, nor is there an angel in heaven that ever felt such a sensation; for Christ took not on him their nature, nor were they ever espoused to him. O the unparalleled meekness, contrition, submission, and resignation, that is felt in the heart of the poor creature when the ring, the robe, and the fatted calf, are brought forth! How the soul is settled and fixed, so as not to leave room for a doubt, a scruple, an if, or a but; for it is assuring us, and sealing us up to the day of eternal redemption.

The Lord certainly is preparing thee for something, my sister. And wouldst thou know what it is? Why, "Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned." After this the breast is put up, and a little *bitter aloes* is rubbed upon it, inasmuch that every sweet drop is followed with bitterness, which I call one of the worst perfumes that scent the Saviour's robes: "All his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia." Thy last letter explained the *myrrh*, which is love, for that always stands first; and *aloes* is the next to it, which thy next letter will smell of more or less. Ezekiel's roll and John's little book had these
compositions

compositions in them. You may call them bitter sweets; for they both agree in their confessions upon this matter: "It was in my mouth sweet as honey, and when I had eaten it my [heart] belly was bitter." When the suckling times are over, the lamb is taken out of the bosom and turned adrift, being ordered to go behind, and to follow the shepherd. This treatment is dreadful, and what was never expected. And now, instead of the word affording sincere milk, it is a dry breast. The little one finds no spoon meat, no bearing upon the fides, no kisses from the lips, no smiles from the face, no answers to their request.

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." And all this is true. But the mother puts the last child down upon its feet among the rest, to make room upon the knee for the new comer. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it. In simplicity be ye children, but in understanding be men." Ay, says Philomela; but my soul desires the first ripe fruit. What shall I do when there is no cluster to eat? Ay, but there is food: "I will send pastors after my own heart, that shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Not so: "How can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?" True: "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

But

But is he not to gather the lambs with his arms, and to carry them in his bosom? Yes: but, after they are one year old, they are not called *lambs*, but *sheep*.

“ The rams of Neḅaioth must minister unto him.” When he puts forth his own sheep he goes before them, and they must hearken to his voice, and follow him. But those that are ewes, great with young, must rely on his power, and hang by his hand; for he leads those. But the lambs, which are under a year old, are, in the general, put in the bosom, under the shepherd’s cloke, while the love of the shepherd’s heart keeps them warm, and the girdle of faithfulness and truth bears them up. But after this they are put among the rest of the flock, and taken to the fold, upon the heights of Israel, where their fold is to be.

A man newly married, according to the old law, was to cheer up his wife for one year, and not to be charged with war. But, after this, war and business must be followed, and other young virgins must enjoy their espousals. But O how shall I endure to see the younger daughters espoused, and enjoying their heavenly nuptials, if I should be left to serve, without a smile, without one propitious look, from that Sweet One, who hath left me like a silly dove without a heart! Love-sickness would bring me to my grave, and jealousy would scorch me in the injured lover’s flames.

flames. I, who have been as a tabret, and banquetted in the wine-cellar so long, shall I ever come, in my love-sickness, to beg a drop or an apple of the young daughters of Zion? or to say, "Stay me with flagons, for I am sick of love?" It all lies in the following prophecy: "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee." When this comes to pass, rebellion, jealousy, rage, &c. with every other corruption, will rise up and shew themselves with seven heads and ten horns. Ay, says Philomela; but I hope in all this thou wilt be a false prophet. Amen and amen, says

Thine in the Lord Jesus Christ,

In the Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

✓ To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

SINCE Philomela received your last favour her soul has been vexed within her, and she must shew it to you, because you are made manifest in my conscience to be a true prophet of the Lord. You prophesied, in your last, that my scent must be changed; and that, as my garments had smelled of *myrrh*, the next time I came to you you should discern the *bitter aloes* also. I knew you would not prove a false prophet to me. But I wish to put the evil day far from me; and therefore said I would not believe it till it came upon me. However, Satan laid a snare for me. He knew I had been for some time in the banqueting-house, feasting on the feast of fat things, and wines on the lees, such as he never had a taste of, nor ever will. The dear souls in the dale, who are on my heart to live and die with them, seeing my happiness, and I can keep nothing from them, for freely I receive, and therefore freely I must give, knowing, by experience, that "there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," and I believe Satan knew that their souls got some good, because

because they covet my company; and therefore he came to me in this manner: he insinuated that my being so open and free to tell them how God dealt with me sprung from nothing but pride, because they should think highly of me; and that, instead of their eyes looking to Christ, they were looking to a creature. I thought I could appeal to conscience it was otherwise; for I knew that, if it were so, it would bring the rod of God upon me in such a manner as they might see what they were trusting to. For a few days I found it a great burden; it made me hate myself. However, I made a resolution that, if my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth, I would no more speak to them of what the Lord had done, or was doing, on my soul. This was last Thursday week. On Saturday last one, named Q in the corner, came to see me: she has attended the orations of our herald for some time; and I have often thought there was a weight on her mind, but never could get her to be open. But now she could hold in no longer. She told me she had read several proclamations lately; and she had also observed a particular alteration in my countenance of late. I was silent, which was enough for her; and she said, there was no one she could open her mind to. She enjoined secrecy; but I could make no promises. She gave me such a description of her case, and put such questions to me, that I quite forgot the resolution

I had

I had made of not opening my mouth any more. She dragged every thing out of me that God had done on my soul, from the time I was first wounded, till the Lord broke my fetters. And her soul seemed to be raised to a degree of hope, at least that there might be mercy for her. A deep work it is; not the work of a day, a month, or a year; though God has permitted it to be kept secret, and she is not aware that any soul knows it but myself. She had written two letters to our watchman, but burnt them both. However, I ran with the tidings to him as soon as I could. She cannot keep it much longer from him. After this, it came to my mind that I had passed the bounds of my promise. However, I promised to do so no more. And now you shall know how God dealt with me on Thursday evening after. As soon as the herald had finished his oration, she came to me at Bethel, with such a countenance as I shall never forget. She was too full to speak. My conscience told me she was cut deeper, under the alarm and warning of the watchman of the night, than ever she was before. But I said in my heart I would not speak to her. I only asked her if she was not well; and she went from me. But my conscience smote me, and cut me in a manner I cannot describe. I went home and to bed; but such a night's lodging I had! The devil and conscience made fine work with me, because I had kept my mouth shut to her when I knew she came to me

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for sympathy. I think I would have given fifty pounds if I could have got up in the night and gone to her; but she was too far off. However, I found my mind at liberty in the morning to write her a letter, which I did, and sent it her directly. On the feast day at even she came to me again at Bethel, with these words: "I thank you, I thank you; I do not deserve it. O what shall I do! Never was any thing so seasonable. If I could have spoke to you on Thursday night I must have told you that I was sure of being damned. O that I was one of the *marked* ones!" My heart was ready to burst, and I cried to her, "You are one, you are one of them."—"O," says she to me, "you shall hear from me; indeed you shall." My very bowels go out after her. Surely Satan will get the worst of it. May I "remember the battle, and do no more." Job xli. 8. I know it will rejoice your heart to hear of this poor sinner. I think her deliverance is not far off. I find I have filled my paper, therefore can only say, I have found the peace I had lost. I believe you know that I was born again to be troublesome to you. Hope you are well. Pray let me hear from you as soon as you can. I have not said one half I wished to say. The Lord bless you with the best of blessings. So prays

Your affectionate sister in the Lord Jesus,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

*To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale, or
elsewhere.*

THINE epistle came safe to hand, and favours a little of the bitter ingredients mentioned in my last. This article is known to all the family, and to them only; nor doth the stranger intermeddle with its opposite. In my last I shewed thee a little of what would befall thee in thy latter days, lest, when these things come on thee, that thou shouldest think some strange thing had happened unto thee; and, if they should continue long, that thou shouldest grow weary and faint in thy mind. Under the old dispensation, as I hinted before, every one that had built a new house, planted a new vineyard, or that was lately married, was to be free at home, and not to be charged with, nor to be engaged in, any war for one whole year. Thou art now building in the temple of the Lord, and wast lately transplanted into the living vine, and newly married to the soul's best husband, and thy year of jubilee is out about next Christmas; near about which time thou mayest expect, either within or without, the alarms of war. When the captain

of our salvation takes the young recruits into the banqueting-house he hangs the banner of love over their heads, while he unfurls it in their hearts; which seems designed to let them know that, when their bounty is spent, they must prepare for the field of action. Therefore let me advise thee now, whilst thou art in the presence-chamber, and the door of hope is shut about thee; while his throne is accessible, and he is shewing thee his love; while all his secret mysteries are brought to light, his secret treasures opened and brought forth, and his heavenly riches communicated; now, while his ear, his heart, and hand, are all open; now, while the days of his espousals, and the days of the gladness of his heart, continue; and while the bridegroom is with thee, and he tells thee to open thy mouth wide and he will fill it, saying, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted thee, even to the whole of the kingdom?" Now, I say, is the time to covet earnestly the best gifts. Seek every love token, ask every needful grace, every blessing, and every gift, that accompanies salvation. Follow after charity, wisdom, righteousness, peace, in all thy petitions; and crave all the promises, in the power of them, which his liberal heart can afford, with respect to future help, need, and preservation; for I must tell thee again, as I have told thee in time past, that "the time will come when ye shall desire to see

one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it." If thou pursue this my counsel, thou wilt be furnished with many powerful pleas in time to come; and, if thou minute down his gracious words and love visits, these would, in some future time, fill thy mouth with arguments. But, alas! thou art too busy. This harvest will be past, and thy sun will be declining; the shadows of the evening will be stretching out, and the trial of faith be coming on. Satan will plunder thy memory of all the sweet promises thou hast obtained. He will address thee as an angel of light, and work upon all the natural and corrupt affections that thou art possessed of; and shall so influence thy natural passions, as that thou shalt even be at a loss to know from whence they come. Then will he sift up, overhaul, and call in question, all this good work; and, while universal charity is flowing in, the best beloved will be drawing off; and then, like a young wanton spendthrift, thou wilt set down and condemn thine own folly and indiscretion for not adopting these measures; for, during the furnace work, there will be only now and then a standing behind the wall, and a glimpse through the lattice, which provokes to jealousy, and, in the general, terminates in fainting fits and love sickness; at which seasons the comeliness of the countenance is much defaced; the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit sullied; gospel simplicity tarnished; the bowels

of mercy straitened ; and, instead of well-set hair, baldness. The tabret becomes a bye-word ; conversation loses its savour, and the words their salt. Let me advise thee to provide for thyself a few high heaps of witnesses, and to set up a few private land-marks, which shall serve thee in time to come ; for the many that are looking to thee, and emptying thy barrel and cruse, will make thee the keeper of their vineyard ; and thou shalt by and by confess that thine own vineyard thou hast not kept. To be open, and to communicate, and to tell others what God hath done for our souls, is right. The woman healed of her issue was called forth before the whole company to confess what she had done, and what had been done in her ; and it was approved. When with the heart we believe, with the mouth we must confess ; for this is being found to return, and to give glory to God. But to make thine own calling clear, and thine own election sure, is, and ought to be, the principal work, and is laying in a good foundation against the time to come. “ When I am old and grey-headed forsake me not, O God of my salvation ! ” saith the Psalmist. And, if thou dost not lay up for a future famine, future times of drought, or future desertions, thou shalt surely complain, as others have done, “ O that it was with me as in months past, when God preserved me, when the Almighty was with me, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, and when my glory was

was fresh in me !” Lay this epistle by thee, and read it over seven years hence ; and then send me word how many lying predictions are found in this scribble of thine

Affectionate friend and servant,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER X.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

WAS I perfect in the language of Canaan, I could convey to your mind the sensations of love and gratitude I feel in my heart to you for the unparalleled kindness you shew to me in your work of faith and labour of love, in the Lord Jesus, to my soul. You never will know, till we sit down in glory together, what an instrument the Lord makes you of confirming and establishing his work on my soul. However, sure I am that this kindness of yours shall in no wise lose its reward. I think that his Majesty's herald and yourself were both born into this world on

purpose to be useful to me. I received a letter from you last Wednesday, which prophesied of some dark and cloudy days. Sure I am that my old man will procure me a large share of fatherly chastisement. But "to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." To be put and kept at a distance from him whom my soul loves, must be a hell upon earth; and I think will be more severely felt by me now, since I have been indulged with such manifestations of his love to my soul as I have been lately. But there will be a sweetness in it when he shall turn again; for it is but for a small moment he will hide his face; and at that time there will be nothing of that bitter ingredient in it called vindictive wrath. I know you never yet sent me one lying prediction, and I am sure that you never will; for every epistle you have sent me came under the seal of the Spirit of God; and precious they are to my soul, and a valuable treasure. I esteem them. Their price is far above rubies, more desirable than fine gold, "sweeter also than the honey and the honeycomb." I must now dismiss your first letter, though I could say much more about it, and the effects of it on my mind. But I have much to say about your second letter, which I received on Saturday evening. It caused sleep to depart from my eyes, and slumber from my eyelids; and I was full of tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day. And, had I had the wings of a dove, I should have been at
 Paddington

Paddington as early on sabbath-day morning as Mary was at the sepulchre of her dear Lord. The first page of it is a mystery to me. I have not wisdom to understand these words of the wife, and his dark saying, "The bee that came to your hive with the wax and honey." I cannot make it out. But it is the "feeling of the wind shaking the cottage," which you think is hastening your arrival at the better house, which filled my heart with sorrow. It made my heart tremble for the ark of God. My mind got a little composed from the Lord's dealings with Israel when he was about to take away Elijah. He did not do it till he had anointed another prophet in his room. As there are so few watchmen that God hath set on the walls of our Zion who can detect an enemy, and give the time of the night, I hope the Lord is not about to leave the city of our assemblies in the hands of blind watchmen, who cannot understand; because he says that "our teachers shall not be moved into a corner any more." From what you say next, in one of yours, I gather that you have some more enemies to encounter. Perhaps you are in perils, according to custom, among false brethren. You speak of many loathing the manna, and calling it light food. This certainly calls for divine judgment. But, as you observe, your crown is sure, because your reward is with your God. Whoever they are that fight against the truth, and the power of it, fight against God.

But

But I can tell you that the thought of your being in trouble drew forth all the sympathetic powers of my soul ; and I am sure my feelings have been mingled with yours ever since ; and, if it is not too great a favour, may I ask thee to lend me thy key, that I may open this lock, that my mind may be eased ; and I should be obliged to you for it as soon as you can. I must speak of the contents of the other part of one of your letters. The second time I read it I cannot describe the sweet ray of light, from God's Spirit, which came on my mind, accompanied with a sweet, melting, humbling frame, which brought me to the feet of Jesus. I found I had the key to that which was my own experience. I could go with you to the end of your letter. You have brought forth all the operations of the love of God on my soul. The effects it produces, and the soul-melting sensations of the poor sinner under it ; the crucifixion of him to the world, which takes place as the consequence of it ; was greatly blessed to me, as it described my own feelings far better than I could myself. I can with confidence say, that I am planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, and likewise in the likeness of his resurrection. The world and I am well agreed ; I am crucified to that, and that is crucified to me ; for, as you observe, Jesus has taken with him my heart, affections, thoughts, desires, wishes, and all that is not mortal, and I am now a stranger and a sojourner

here, as all my fathers in the faith were. And I have need of much patience to wait my appointed time till my change come. The Lord bless you, and give you much of his presence, and of the enjoyment of his eternal love. So prays

Your very sincere and affectionate friend and

sister in the bonds of the gospel of Christ,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XL

*To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale, or
elsewhere.*

LONG looked-for is come at last:
"They that sow shall reap." But I thought it was almost four months before the expected harvest came on. Banqueting times take up all the attention; and we know the memory is treacherous. The woman at the well forgot her pitcher; Peter talked he knew not what; and Paul forgot whether his body was in the company or out of it
in

in his flight to paradise. And no wonder, when the new wine of the kingdom goes down so sweetly as to cause "the lips of those that are asleep to speak;" for persons that talk in their sleep are not always consistent. Glad am I to find that my sister continues in the fellowship of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. She holds fellowship with the Father by a participation of his everlasting love; she has fellowship with Jesus, and walks with him in peace and equity; and has fellowship with the Spirit by the witness he bears with her spirit, and by the cry of Abba, Father; and by the comfort that he communicates, by the promises he applies, and by his kind help against her infirmities at the throne of grace. O happy, happy souls, who rule with God, and are faithful with the saints! How great the condescension of the Most High, who humbleth himself to visit such poor mortals, and to enwrap them in the rays and flames of infinite divinity; and with favour to compass them as with a shield; and to exalt them sensibly into the enjoyment of his omnipresence; where we "see the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off!" In whose reconciling face the Father of all mercies for ever shines, as well pleased; and shines with approbation, complacency, and delight, as propitious, and as the fountain of all grace, mercy, and peace; "while we look as through a glass darkly, and are changed into the
same

same image;" renewed in knowledge, and blessed with righteousness and true holiness; in which image the mind goes from glory to glory; from the glory of one perfection to the glorious discovery of another, till we see all his divine attributes meet, centre, and harmonize together, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to the glory of God in the salvation of souls. This, this is the religion of Jesus, and God's mystery among the Gentiles. Enthroned in our affections, he reigns unrivalled; and there he sways his righteous sceptre, and spreads the beams of immortal light. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." All the poor sinner's thoughts are brought into sweet captivity; tranquillity and peace are the blessed fruits and effects of his glorious and undisturbed reign; while the poor from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, inherit the blessings of his throne, and the flourishing felicity of his mild government, and admire the order of it, the justice and equity of it, the execution of his laws, and the regard that he pays to truth in every branch of his administration. This, my sister, is the kingdom of God, and the empire of all-conquering grace, which banishes the infernal usurper from the heart, and divests him of his dark panoply, in which he trusted, and by which the objects of Heaven's choice are long kept in slavery: "Other lords have had dominion over us; but now, by thy power, will we make mention of thy name."

name." In righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, stands the glorious reign of the King of kings, which rescues helpless souls from the triple reign of Satan, sin, and death. But how little is this religion known in our day! How few that preach the kingdom of God! and how few that are acquainted with that power in which this kingdom stands! And why should the Ancient of Days reveal and make these things known to us, who are as sheep that no man taketh up; as the off-scouring of the earth, whom none sought after or cared for? Shut up in the dark regions, and laid in irons; hated, as we thought, by both worlds, and condemned to perpetual drudgery; reprobated, as I once believed, from eternity; cursed from the womb, and doomed to destruction! But our thoughts were not God's thoughts. We were not to die till we had seen the Lord's Christ. The vision was to speak in us; and we were appointed to look at him whom we have pierced, and mourn, and melt in the soul-dissolving vision, till the divine potter thought fit to mould and form us into another vessel, which shall contain the heavenly treasure, without bursting with pride, so as to break the bottle, and cause the wine to run out, and the bottle to perish. The bee, my sister, with wax on her wings, and honey in her bag, was thine own epistle. Perpetual heats and colds much impair my poor, frail tabernacle, and I feel it daily, especially in the winter season; and
therefore

therefore I know it cannot stand long. The whole bulk of professors in general hate the power of godliness, and are taught to guard themselves against it, and all convictions from it; and I know that God will visit for these things. Our country hath long been the "valley of vision." But the sun is going down, and the shadows of the evening are stretching out; the light is much hated, and stumbling upon the dark mountains must be expected. But may we, "who are of the day, watch and be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation! For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the most high and eternal God, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all honour and glory, power and praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for ever and ever, amen and amen, says

Thine affectionate brother

In the best of all bonds,

and in the sweetest of all ties,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XII.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I HAVE been expecting to hear from you every post for some time. I therefore have taken the liberty of sending you this, "to stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance." I hope this will find you well in body and soul. I know it is always well with the body when the soul prospers; and nothing can make the soul prosper but the presence of the dear Redeemer, the friend of sinners, and a sense of his love known, felt, and enjoyed, in the heart, by the operation of the blessed Spirit. This makes a heaven upon earth. The Lord has blessed me with the enjoyment of this ever since I came from Gasson's Bower, more or less. And truly he hath made my cup to run over. O what love to the poor prodigal, who had spent all his substance, and was brought to a famine, yea, brought to want a morsel of bread, and a drop of water, and could not feed upon husks! Never did I, till of late, feel such meltings of heart under a sense of this love manifested to my soul. Like Ezekiel, I have been brought through this river of pleasure four times.

times. The first time it was up to my ankles; the second time it came to my knees; the next time to my loins; and I believe I have been brought through it the fourth time this last week; and I found it to be a river without bottom or shore. And this water is come into my soul; and I am sure that I shall never sink here; for the Lord has given me the hands of faith, that I may spread them forth and swim. I feel all those wonderful operations that the prodigal felt when his father said to the servant, "Bring hither the best robe, and put it on him; put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Feel it I do; but it is past all description. Costly it was, and that the Redeemer knew when he gave his soul an offering for my sins, and shed his precious blood to satisfy divine justice in my behalf. O it melts me, and breaks my heart! O, my dear brother, help me to praise him! I cannot, I cannot praise him as I would. But I shall do it when this mortal shall have put on immortality. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with his likeness." I believe the Lord will not keep me long here. Well, I know that "neither height nor depth, life nor death, things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate me from his love." It rejoices my heart to see the Lord is carrying on his work on the hearts of many poor sinners under the orations of his Majesty's herald in this dark corner

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of

of the globe. He is "a burning and a shining light." He stands in the rostrum as a flaming fire for God. Surely he is the greatest blessing that ever God bestowed on such worthless sinners as we are. Sister Moorhen's wounds get deeper and deeper. I believe she will, in the Lord's time, be brought to that strait where all human strength expires, and where there is none shut up or left. There is another poor soul also who is tumbling all to pieces. This is the best news I can send you. O that Zion's cords may be lengthened, and her stakes strengthened! Give my kind love to your travelling friends; and accept my thanks for your soul-strengthening letter. It was "as cold water to a thirsty soul, or good news from a far country; as apples of gold in pictures of silver." And I know that my God will reward you. He says that a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose its reward. And those that water others shall be watered themselves. Was it not so, I think the favours he heaps on me would make me miserable. I am happy to find you are better. I hope it will not be long before I see you in the Dale. I hope you will favour me with a letter soon. In the mean time, let me have an interest in your prayers, that I may be kept humble, watchful, and near to the Lord. May the Lord bless you in body and soul, in your basket and store,

store, in your goings out and in your comings in,
is the prayer of

Your very sincere friend

and sister in Christ Jesus,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XIII.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

“ Thus saith the Lord God, I will take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on an high mountain and eminent. In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.” Ezek. xvii. 22. From the royal house of David was this young twig cropped, and on mount Zion it is planted, where

the fulness of the ever-blessed Godhead, which dwells in Jesse's Branch, displays his omnipresence and omnipotence in the souls of thousands of poor sinners, and unites them (as boughs in the cedar) to himself; in which almighty power, love, and goodness, manifested and put forth in the heart of the sinner, the soul rests satisfied and contented, and finds and feels his shadow a sweet screen from Satan's fiery darts, and from the piercing sentences of a fiery law. In the shadowing branches of this goodly cedar shall the birds of paradise dwell. Sing care away, Philomela; for our beloved "giveth songs in the night." Sing of his right hand and stretched-out arm, which got himself the victory over thy heart, and over all thy foes. Sing of mercy and of judgment; of judgment past, and of mercy come. Sing of thy well beloved touching his vineyard, and of union with the living vine. Sing of his glorious triumph, of his dying love, and of his redeeming blood; and sing glory to the righteous. "Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody; for as well the fingers as the players on instruments shall be there; all my springs are in thee."

He that receives his testimony into his heart, namely, that we must be born again (John iii. 11), and that he that believes in him shall be saved (John iii. 32), and he that follows him shall have the light of life (John xxi. 24), is sealed; the
testimony

testimony is come home to his soul with power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; which assurance is the sealing, confirming, and establishing, the soul in the certainty and enjoyment of the testimony received; and of a part and lot in all the blessings and benefits promised and testified of. He sets his hand to the seal that God is true; he subscribes the evidence, and the book of the purchase. "One shall say, I am the Lord's," for he hath taken me as a prey from the mighty; "and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob," saying, I have got both the birthright and the blessing; "and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel," crying aloud, I have prevailed in prayer; I have looked at my beloved till I have overcome him; and I shall be more than conqueror (over heaven and earth) through him that hath loved me; "for as a prince have I power with God and with man, and have prevailed."

These are golden days, Philomela! Make the most of them now, while the evil days come not; now, while Wisdom leads thy soul through all her mystic gates, wards, and doors, and exhibits her glorious and visionary scenes before thee. "She stands on the top of high places," Prov. viii; on Calvary, on mount Zion, and on every little hill thereof; on the munition of rocks, and on all the ancient mountains, and on the everlasting

hills of electing love, and " by the way in the places of the paths." Here she stands, in all these watering places, breathing places, resting places, halting places, and fainting places, in order to give caution, encouragement, refreshment, seasonable counsel, strength, and comfort; by all which they go from strength to strength, " while passing through the valley of Baca." Heavenly showers fill the pools: " I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will make the wilderness pools of water, and the dry land springs of water."

" She crieth at the gates;" and the voice of her cry is, " The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter. This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter."

" She crieth at the entry of the city," saying, " Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Wherefore thou art no more a stranger and a
foreigner,

foreigner, but a fellow-citizen of the saints and of the household of God. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

"She crieth at the coming in of the doors." Prov. viii. 3. The first doors she cries at are the doors of death's shadow: "Hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?" Job xxxviii. 17. These doors are the *covering* and *veil* that is spread over all nations (Isa. xxv. 7), and the dismal gloom that the god of this world hath blinded our minds with, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into us, and we should be saved. But Wisdom cries at these doors, saying, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Isa. ix. 2. The light of the Lord penetrates through and opens these doors, and the understanding receives the light, and goes forth in it, and we begin (the doors being opened) "with open face to behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18. But, though the understanding is gone forth, the soul is not wholly enlarged: "Light is given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul." Job iii. 20.

Then Wisdom leads us to another door, saying, "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope."

hope." Hosea ii. 14, 15. Now hope enters in, and expectation goes forth; and the cry of Wisdom at this door is, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, which spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but his leaf shall be green, he shall not be careful in the year of drought, nor shall he cease from yielding fruit." Thus Wisdom rends the veil, and opens the doors of death's shadow, and lets the understanding look out of obscurity, and out of darkness. Then she banishes black despair, and opens the door of hope, when hope enters the soul, and expectation of better times goes forth.

And next she leads us to another door, saying, "They rehearsed all that God had done by them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Acts xiv. 27. The seat, or proper place, of faith is the heart: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," &c. Obdurate hardness and unbelief are the doors that keep the word and faith out of the heart, till a divine power attends the voice of Wisdom. But she cries at this door, and her powerful voice is, "As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me." Now faith goes into the heart by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; then our obdurate hardness gives way, the door of faith opens, and the right hand of the Lord makes the injurious bolt

bolt of cursed infidelity fly back. The opening of this door dissolves the soul: "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him." Song v. 4. But still we are not enlarged; for this is but the hole of the door. The bowels move for him, but he is not come in the promised and glorious manifestation of himself. Faith is come, as it was to the blind man healed; but the object of faith is not yet discovered: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

The next door that Wisdom opens is the door of "the strong hold of Satan." And her voice at this door is, I am sent "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Isa. xlii. 7. "Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee." And this is a full discharge. Guilt flies, the yoke of our transgression is broken, Satan vanishes, pardoning love flows in, and fear and torment are cast out; the chains of our sins are knocked off, the prison garments are laid aside, and the wedding garment is put on. He puts off our sackcloth, and girds us with gladness.

The next door is the door of mercy. This opens almost of its own accord, as soon as we escape the prison. By Jesus we have access with confidence

fidence into this grace wherein we stand. And the cry of Wisdom at this door is, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John x. 7—9. Now this door, that admits us into the presence of God, and into communion and fellowship both with the Father and the Son, is God's lifting up the light of his countenance upon us, and giving us the light of the knowledge of the glory of himself in the face of Jesus Christ, and a full enjoyment of God's everlasting love through Christ, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. This is the door; for, if God hides his face, who can behold him? and, without being drawn by his love, who can come to him? And, if he leaves a man in his own guilt, and under the wrath of the law, by these things "he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening." Job xii. 14. Hence it appears that a man must have the light of the Lord's countenance, attended with his love, before he can enter into the joy of the Lord.

The next door that Wisdom cries at is the door of the wedding-chamber: "And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." Matt. xxv. 10. Wisdom's cry at this door will be, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter

enter the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This door will be opened at the first resurrection, after the living fairs are changed, and the dead in Christ raised; in which they will be safe, while the wicked are burnt up, and the world with them. And this will be Wisdom's last cry, "Thy dead men shall live; with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead."—"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Isa. xxvi. 19—21.

Now will the Master be risen up, and have shut the door, after which all knocking and calling will meet with no regard, for there can be no admittance.

Thus, dearly beloved Philomela, have I endeavoured to shew thee something of the paths of Wisdom, together with her mystical gates and doors, as well as I could, and as far as I have been led through them; and through which all regenerate souls pass who "follow the Lamb in the regeneration." This "is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:

seen : the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." Job xxviii. 7, 8. The lion of the bottomless pit never walked here, nor were any whelps of his ever found there. And to this agrees the prophet : " And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those : the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there ; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads." Isa. xxxv. 8—10. Numbers are searching to find this path, who never had so much as their face Zionward, but stumble upon the dark mountains in a way not cast up : " The labour of the foolish weareth every one of them ; because he knoweth not how to go to the city." Eccl. x. 15. This is the way that is " above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath ;" it is " the way of life ; and in the path thereof there is no death." The curse and wrath of God attend every other way but this. " There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Because they seek not union with the true vine, nor have they any regard to the branches in it, therefore " their portion is cursed in the earth : he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards."

vineyards." Job xxiv. 18. And now, what is this *highway* and a way? The *highway* is Christ and faith in him: "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." This is the highway. And *the way*, which is to be called, "The way of holiness," is, following Christ in the regeneration; for such shall sit down with him on his throne.

Thus, Philomela, I have led thee in the way which, in a state of nature, I knew not, and in a path which, to all unregenerate men, is not known, nor can be, till God make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. Upon all other paths but this hypocrites as well as saints may walk. But no lion nor lion's whelps, no fierce lion nor ravenous beast, no unclean creature, no apostate, no heretic or hypocrite, have I ever met with or found upon this path: the way of regeneration is untrodden and unfrequented by all these. I could wish thee to make a few high heaps, and to set up a few land-marks, to be of use in future times. But nothing of this sort can be attended to at present; for at Wisdom's gates and doors not only her heavenly voice is heard and felt, but all manner of fruits, new and old, are laid up at these gates for his best beloved. Song vii. 13. Hence the pleasantness of the ways, the ravishing voice, and delicious fruit, take up all the attention; so that all advice upon this head is in vain. Therefore sing on, Philomela; for to
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add to the melody of thy heart, and to afford some fresh matter for the song, is the cause of my sending these "to the chief finger on my stringed instruments." Hab. iii. 18.

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XIV.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

YOUR having informed me that the bee came to your hive with wax on its legs, and honey in its bag, encouraged me to come again to you. Precious was your last to me! delicious fare! for really it has been so refreshing to my soul, that I can feed upon nothing else: therefore have compassion on me, and go on still to help me; and you will certainly experience the wise man's words to be true, viz. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Consider that this week there is no going up to Bethel. Our watchman is removed into a corner, so that we can neither see him nor hear him. The Lord bless the interview, and grant that he may soon return, and

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come

come to us in all the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ. I have read again and again your last letters, and found a second benefit. I believe, while I remain upon this earth, that I shall never have done with them. Some of the mysteries I had the key to before they came, or I never could have found out the riddle. Sweetly was my soul led into the experience and enjoyment of those blessed truths; which did so humble and meek my soul, that it crucified me afresh to this sinful world; so that I am not fit to live in it. I seem quite insensible to every thing in it, and hardly at times know what I am about, or where I am. This has given me some light into those words of our blessed Saviour, in his prayer to the Father before he entered upon his sufferings. Praying for his disciples, he says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." I cannot but think that you have been lately a sabbath-day's journey into some part of the promised land, and have reached as far as the brooks of Eschol; for what you have sent to me seems to be some of the first ripe fruits, a most precious cluster. It could not be carried by one; but it hath been laid on a staff, and born betwixt two. It was one of the choicest of all blessings; no less than an earnest of the whole inheritance. O that I was but with you, to tell you what I enjoy now, while the King's herald is with you! But this is impossible. Wives
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and mothers must be keepers at home. But the heaven-born soul cannot be confined. Though absent in body, yet am I present in spirit; and, had I the wings of a dove, nothing under heaven should hinder my flight, for once, into the Desert.

I know now, by blessed experience, that nothing but a sense of the dying love of Jesus can humble a proud heart, and soften the stubborn spirit of a sinner, so as to bring him to the Lord's feet; and I am a living witness that this will do it. This will subdue the most hardened, rebellious, and desperate wretch that ever breathed on this earth; and this will be my wonder and admiration to all eternity. O that I was but above, that I might "praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God!" How do I long to join with the hundred and forty-four thousand in their song to him that hath loved us, and redeemed us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Surely my voice will be the loudest among them.

My soul thanks you for what I have received this week from you. I have had a *banquet indeed*. May a full reward be given you by your Father, and my Father, your God and my God! A sweet shelter indeed my soul has found from the windy storm and tempest. I find it as the shadow of a great rock in this weary land. My soul has still in remembrance the wormwood and the gall, which were bitter enough to my soul. But all is
past;

past; and nothing of vindictive wrath shall my soul know henceforth and for ever. What astonishing love was it for the Lord to pass by such a rebel as I was, and to say unto me, when I was in my blood, "Live." Yea, he has spread his skirt over me; and in that blessed robe shall I appear before him in the great day, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and, though black as the tents of Kedar, fair as the curtains of Solomon. As you observe, could we always live on the mount, without any interruption; but, alas! down from the mount we must come. But I am, like Peter, for detaining the Lord, and building a tabernacle, that I may abide with him till he shall take me to the upper and better house.

What the Lord is preparing me for, I know not; and what my path will be next, I am in the dark about. You intimate that he is preparing me for the field of action. May I be taught to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ! The world, the flesh, and the devil, are against me, I know; but this I know likewise, that I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. However, at present I seem as if I had no enemies; for the Lord has made the corruptions of my heart, and Satan too, as still as a stone. And sweetly does he commune with my soul, which humbles me in the dust before him; and I feel such meltings of heart as I never knew any thing of before; which have been much produced by

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your

your two last letters. The mystic gates and wards that Wisdom is leading my soul through are some of the secrets that are with them in whose heart he has put his fear. "I," says Wisdom, "lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment, to cause them that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." I believe that what I am now in the enjoyment of is some of that substance, that sabbath-day's portion, which you told me in my dream I should enjoy. Surely the Lord does now, as well as in days of old, instruct by dreams and visions of the night. "When deep sleep falleth upon men, then he sealeth their instructions." I am sure I can witness to the truth of this. We were greatly in expectation of seeing you before now. But the Lord knows best when to send you. I hope, when you do come, it will be with good news from a far country, and make it one of the days of the Son of Man to us. I think I need not tell you that I shall be happy to hear from you again. I have a young *hidden one* with me who desires to be remembered to you. She wishes you the enjoyment of every spiritual blessing. She is one that is waiting at the pool for the moving of the waters, to be healed of all her spiritual diseases. Our little sister, who hath no breasts, is much indisposed. I think she would greatly esteem a letter from you. Remember my love to Father G——n. I hope he is not offended at the liberty I took in writing
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to him. I must conclude, wishing you every blessing of the better covenant, and that you may ever have much of the presence of the Lord with you.
So prays

Yours, in sincere affection,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XV.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

My dear sister's epistle is arrived, with all its good tidings, and the reflections of good news from a far country. The night is not only far spent, but gone, with thee; and nothing but the day-spring from on high visits thee. The wilderness springs, and the desert blossoms as the rose. Nothing now but honey from the comb, wine from the cluster, and milk from the breast. The old man is crucified with Christ, yea, dead, buried, and the body of sins destroyed; and there is an end of him. Satan, who had the power of death, is destroyed also, for Christ hath tri-

umphed over him upon the cross; so that no evil is expected from that quarter. Self-denial, a daily cross, the furnace of affliction, and the fiery trial of faith, are all out of sight, and out of mind, and neither desired nor expected.

You inform me that you should like to continue in that mount. But I must confess it is a mystery to me that thou art not down from it before now. Faith must be tried with fire before it shall be found unto praise, and glory, and honour, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Can you glory in your infirmities? Can you take pleasure in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake? To be sure the most useful soldiers in an army must be the young recruits, who are engaged in spending their bounty; and the most useful children in a family must be those who are hanging at the breast. Such soldiers serve to fill the muster-roll; and such children serve to increase the number of a family; and that is all the use they are of. God hath set the day of prosperity and the day of adversity one against the other. But your evil days come not. The reason of my long silence is your long prosperity. I may be a fellow-helper of your joy; but to comfort them that mourn is a greater act of charity. It is not my peculiar province to tune the love-strings of an heart that is always filled with melody. Besides, you have very few, in that part of the world, to sing to but those of heavy hearts;
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and much music to these may provoke them to jealousy, and they may envy your happiness, and be led, by the devil and unbelief, to curse their hard fate, unless you can mingle a little wisdom with it; that is, conceal it, when need requires, and become weak to the weak, and as bound to them that are under the law.

I once knew a young man who continued in his comforts for three or four years, and who seemed to have nothing else but joy and happiness; and at that time I had seldom any thing else but temptations, bondage, persecution, hunger, cold, and nakedness; and I have often envied his happiness, longed to be indulged like him, and cursed my hard fate and evil days. But he turned out an awful apostate, and, when he had filled his measure, came to his end in the midst of his days. I am watching to see what sort of a suckling thou wilt turn out to be; whether one of them who always need milk, being unskilful in the word of righteousness; or one of full age, who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, and so live upon strong meat. When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, with all his saving benefits, when pardon, justification, and adoption, all came in at once, and perfect liberty was proclaimed, I looked at him whom I had pierced, and mourned; not for him, for I had got him; but over him, to think of his dreadful sufferings for such a worthless wretch as me.

His dying love melted me ; his comforts filled my soul with holy grief ; I rejoiced in his salvation, but wept all the day long over my suffering Saviour. My unworthiness made me coyly put away his tender mercy from me, and I cringed from him to shun the light. But he pressed his love upon me, and pursued me, and compelled me to use freedom and familiarity with him. This glorious vision, and the blessed effects of it, continued, excepting a few intervals, for near twelve months ; and every evil of my heart was entirely hid from me ; at which time the promises came into my soul swarming like bees ; and, as they came into my heart, so they discharged their rich and blessed contents, and that with power, love, and comfort ; when at the same time the Spirit explained their meaning to my understanding, and applied their blessings to my heart ; and I sucked the breasts of these consolations ; I milked out, and was satisfied and delighted with the abundance of Zion's glory. I was dandled on the knee, and borne upon the side ; and, as one whom his mother comforteth, so did my God and Saviour comfort me ; and I was comforted in Jerusalem ; for I had an open vision of that mystical city for some hours together, and that in the day-time. This open vision enlarged my mind, and extended my views, and my inward consolations abounded ; insomuch that my soul melted with love, gratitude, meekness, humiliation, contrition,

tration, and godly sorrow, all the day long. I loathed myself in dust and ashes, and thought I could never be enough avenged on myself for my former folly, nor ever appear little enough in my own eyes, nor be enough grateful to the King of kings and Lord of lords. This continued, as before observed, well nigh a whole year, without much variation; and in these frames I was wonderfully secure, and expected daily to be ripening for glory, and that I should soon be called to the upper world; and I longed for it. Little did I think that these comforts would ever be exchanged for spiritual desertions, the piercing frowns and flights of Heaven, and the dreadful assaults of Satan. I had, in my unspeakable joy, defied both the devil and sin. The sucking child had played on the hole of the asp; but it is the weaned child that shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. I had, in my prosperity, said, "Surely I shall never be moved; for thou, Lord, of thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong." After the expiration of the above term I found the corruptions of my heart begin to stir, and appear in sight. John could not be more terrified at the appearance of the beast with seven heads and ten horns than I was at the appearance of these. I cried mightily to God, and down they all went, and out of sight. Soon after they appeared again; and I prayed, and all these little foxes, that spoiled the vines, sculked into their holes. But soon they appeared

more formidable, first one and then another ; and, before I could get one out of fight by prayer, there would appear ten more in fight, till I quite despaired of driving out these old inhabitants of the land. And now my comforts fled, and the Lord left me ; and Satan came to present to my view the holiness of a real saint, and how widely I differed from one of that happy number, by suggesting such texts as these : “ He that is born of God sinneth not ; ” “ They do no iniquity ; they walk in his law,” &c. And with this temptation also was I beset, namely, that I had inadvertently sinned against the Holy Ghost. This cut my girdle. I cast away all my confidence, repented of my presumption in claiming Christ as mine, and relinquished, as far as unbelief could go, all pretensions to any part or lot in the great salvation of Christ. At this time the Lord returned with double love and treble glory, and revived the whole work, and brought it all forth to light again, and led me to compare spiritual things with spiritual. His work within, with his word of promise without, and what I read in his book, I found to be engraved on my heart, and I appeared to be established like the everlasting hills.

And now I must tell my friend how this trial came upon me. I had been for some time turning over in my mind such passages as these ; “ You shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.” “ Is it through much tribulation we must enter

enter into the kingdom of God." " I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." " He that will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me." I knew that I had none of these exercises, and therefore concluded all was not right with me ; that I was not " in the footsteps of the flock ;" and, fearing of coming short of the promised rest, and of any thing being lacking in my faith that is essential to salvation, I secretly wished for trials and troubles, and for such tribulation as lay in the way to the kingdom ; and soon after the above-described desertion came on. But, after the above-mentioned revival of the work, my mountain seemed so strong again, that I thought, as before, that I should never be moved again. But, soon after, another spiritual desertion came on, attended with wrath, bitterness of soul, legal bondage, and intolerable hardness of heart. And with this a very strange fire was kindled, which I never had felt before, and that was spiritual jealousy ; and this stirred up the most bitter rebellion, and laid me open to the cruel assaults of Satan. All these came on at once. This sad complication of miseries so confounded me, and drank up my spirits, that I was obliged to quit my lawful labour, and to wander into the fields and woods. At length the Lord came again, as before, and brought his whole work on my soul to light again ; and I cursed my folly in giving way to Satan and to unbelief, and for calling in question the

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the faithfulness and truth of the unchangeable Jehovah; and secretly wished for another onset with the devil, not doubting but I should quit myself like a man. But, as soon as the next attack came on, I turned back in the day of battle, although harnessed and carrying a bow; for the devil, varying his temptations, surprised me on that side where I was most secure. And hence it appeared as though some strange thing had happened unto me. For some months I went on, up and down in the balance of the sanctuary, this way. And I learnt one lesson in this field of action, and that was, that the Lord's strength was made perfect in weakness. For, when I resolved and mustered up all my courage, I never stood at all, but fell when the first dart reached me; but, when I feared, trembled, and cried mightily to my God and Saviour, he hath strengthened the weak against the strong, so that the weak hath come even to the fortress. I have, at such times, been enabled even to resemble a soldier of Christ. I have rebuked the devil for his insolence and blasphemy; I have cursed him and defied him, in the name of the living God. I told him he was damned, and his punishment would certainly come on him, and that my eyes should see it; and he could not deny it, nor reply against it. However, these continual changes, one day at the gates of heaven, and the next day in the belly of hell, led me to conclude that it was not pleasing to
 God

God that I was so insatiable after comfort; because I perceived that my joys got more and more short-lived, and my bitter seasons were more and more lengthened out. The day of prosperity appeared but an hour, and the day of adversity a month. My heart was well acquainted with its own bitterness; nor did strangers intermeddle with my joy. Yet I secretly wished that my feet stood in a more even path. But must I tell you all the secret? must I disclose my own shame? Take it then. I thought in my heart, and muttered out with my lips, the following perverseness: "I believe the Lord grudges me my comforts, or else he would never suffer me to be so buffeted by the devil every time they are gone; and I would sooner be without them than go on so." And the Lord took me at my word; for the sweet breast of consolation was immediately withdrawn, to my great grief, and no small mortification; and I found it just as the evangelical prophet represents it: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Isa. xxviii. 9, 10. The breast being withdrawn, I searched the scriptures day and night to see what security I could get, what confirmation and establishment the word of God afforded. I compared
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his work on my soul with his word, and especially those parts where he promises to make a new covenant with us, to pardon sin, and give us a new heart, &c. ; and I found the work to be genuine, and that it would stand the test of every text, except such as these : “ He that is born of God sinneth not.” “ They also do no iniquity : they walk in his ways.” Psalm cxix. 3. These I could not make out, as they seemed to assert nothing less than perfection. At these I often staggered ; and they were sad stumbling-blocks to me. However, I considered the decrees and purposes of God, his covenants, promises, faithfulness, and truth ; the immutability of his nature, the finished work of Christ, the oaths of God, the Spirit’s work, and his faithfulness to his children in every age ; and got much light, and gathered much strength, this way ; and the blessed Spirit, who before was my comforter, was now a spirit of revelation and understanding to me ; and, having lost all my milk and honey, I fed upon strong meat ; the breast was taken away, and knowledge and understanding became my food. I had before grown in grace, and now I grew in knowledge ; and my mind was much employed in heavenly meditation on the glorious truths of the gospel. But this did not afford that nourishment, warmth, and heavenly sweetness, to the heart, which the other did. I often sat down and considered the days of old, when “ the visitations of
God

God preserved my spirit, when his glory was fresh in me, and when the dew lay all night upon my branch;" and wept, sighed, whined, and sobbed, after the milk and honey. But the Holy Spirit, at such times, would produce submission and resignation in me to the will of God, and suggest to my mind that, when I had finished my course, I should have my heart full of that sweet fare, and that for evermore; which made me long for death. At these times " I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul was even as a weaned child." Psalm cxxxi. 2. About that period I was working in the coal barge, and suffering hunger, cold, and almost nakedness; besides the conflicts within, persecutions without, and the loss of that which to me was dearer than life. It pleased God to pity and visit me again. I had an old lumber-room, where I often withdrew when my burden was too heavy for me to bear; and as sure as I entered that place, so sure did the Lord of all lords visit me. He would " come down as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth;" till I could compare it to nothing but what I had read of entering into the holy of holies, when " the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." O what condescension for the Most High to humble himself to take notice of such worms of the dust!

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After many of these soul-reviving and soul-establishing visits, those trials, which are peculiar to the ministry, came on, attended with legal bondage, and various temptations and oppositions; and beset I was with every class of heretics, till I went, like the woman the Saviour healed, bowed together for several years; till, what with trouble, real want, and hard labour, I was at the brink of the grave, and longed for it; but it came not. At length it pleased God to renew my youth like the eagle's; and he supplied me with temporal necessities, equipped me with truth and fortitude, and gave me a great desire to be useful; and he soon let me see that I did not labour in vain. And now this became my food; it was my meat and drink to do his will, and to see his work prosper. And this led me to walk steady with my God in peace and equity; and, having obtained help from him, I continue to this day. Thus, Delilah like, your three succeeding epistles have drawn the secret out of my heart. And, after all, what is it? Why, divine power lodged in a lock of human hair; or, to speak in New Testament language, it is God's strength made perfect in man's weakness. Adieu. I must attend the household; but cannot help subscribing myself

Ever yours,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I RECEIVED safe your very valuable epistle; and I hope you will excuse my not acknowledging the receipt of it before this time. I assure you it has not been for want of inclination, but want of time. My hands have been fully employed in nursing, which hath been to me a sore trial. The Lord has visited my dear little boy with a disorder which we feared would prove fatal. And under this trial the Canaanites, which are left in the land to be as thorns in my side, made me severely feel their power, assisted by Satan their ally, who appeared at their head, and who made such an incroad upon me as greatly disquieted my spirits. The rebellion of my heart was stirred up, and hard thoughts of God followed. I could not give up the child; and Satan suggested such things to my mind concerning the eternal state of the boy; should he die under the curse of God's righteous law, as I believe I never shall let come out of the doors of my lips. But I assure you they were such as rent the caul of my heart; and, though I could not give the child

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up,

up, yet I trembled at the thoughts of asking for his life. I was pressed beyond measure. I could only say to the Lord, "Thou knowest my heart, what I am by nature; and that nothing but these rank weeds will ever be produced by me, unless thou art pleased, by the operations of thy Spirit, to work in me that submission and resignation to thy will which shall glorify thee." The Lord appeared for the child, and hath restored him to us again. But submission and resignation were not found in my heart. His Excellency sent me your epistle, which you directed to be left with him, with the following direction on it: "To her Majesty the Queen of the Beggars, value a thousand pounds." But, when I had read the contents, I was constrained to enhance the value; for I found the price of it to be far above rubies. I thank you kindly for it. I thought of an old proverb, viz. "To be fore-warned is to be fore-armed."

I think there can but little befall me in the path of tribulation but what you have shewed me already. You seem to intimate that you think I may be a stumbling-block to those whose joys do not rise so high as God is pleased to raise mine. Indeed, it is true that some envy me, and some are filled with jealousy. But envy and jealousy seem to me to be two different things. Where the latter is working, I believe it will be a means, under God, of bringing the same blessings into their

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souls.

souls. These will not rejoice when I am brought low, but will be the first that will help me, by their prayers, that I may be raised up again. But where envy works, nothing would gratify these more than to see me down. But this is like to bring nothing into their own souls. To the former I feel my whole heart and soul going out; but to the latter I cannot find a union.

Something in your letter quite surprised me, and that is, to think that, after you had been led in such a sweet path for ten months, and under such manifestations of divine love, you should again be brought into such darkness as to doubt of the work on your soul being real. Had you not related it as experienced by yourself, I should have staggered at it. But, if God has dealt so with you, I fear I shall not escape. But it is such an evil day as I would wish to put far from me. Should such a time ever come, I think I shall find your epistle to be of great use to me. But I should never have thought there was a probability of any thing like it befalling me. To be sure at present my mountain seems to stand strong; the place of my defence is the Munition of Rocks; and God is truly gracious to me; for I have not had one day of real darkness in my own soul since the time we all met at Gaffon's Bower, where the Lord met me by the way, as he did the disciples in their journey to Emmaus. I saw his Excellency yesterday. We are reaping the fruits of his

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labour.

labour. He came to us (after his long absence, as I called it) in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace. I am glad to hear we are to have another printed sermon from you next week. I found your last much blessed to me. I shall be glad to hear that you are coming among us again; and I hope you will favour me with another epistle soon; for I feel myself disappointed if I do not hear from you once a week. I should be glad to know, in your next, if I am at liberty to shew your last epistle to our friends: they know I have had one. I believe his Excellency has told them. But I have given them to understand that they shall not see it without your leave. The young stripling from the Bower declared yesterday that he would not let me be at peace till he had seen it. I was glad to hear, by my sister's letter, that you had not been afflicted so badly with cold and hoarseness this winter as you have been some winters past. May the Lord continue you in bodily health and much soul prosperity, is the fervent prayer of

Your affectionate sister in the

bonds of the gospel,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

To PHILOMELA, of the King's Dale.

THE epistle of my sister is come safe, and now lies before me. It is, according to the prophet Habakkuk, a song of various things, sung in various tunes. Your days have been sorrow, and your travail grief. Call this time of adversity Gad, for there is a troop behind; or call them the beginning of sorrows, for unbelief will often tell you that there will be no end of them. Satan is a skilful adversary. He can alter both his appearance and his influence. While I lay in the dark regions of the shadow of death, under the arrests of divine justice, and filled with fury and the rebukes of my God, he worked constantly upon the hardness of my heart, the carnal enmity of my mind, and on that soul-destroying sin of unbelief, in which I was shut up. He took occasion to multiply his accusations by the sins which stood before mine eyes, the burden of guilt which I felt, and the wrath of the law which worked in me. And I knew that this was the devil, and the works of him. But, after my deliverance had been proclaimed, my calling made clear, and mine election sure, he came to me again,

so altered in appearance, in language, and in influence, that I really did not know my old acquaintance. He came not now in his sable garb, but in his shining robe; not to attend my funeral to hell and the grave, but as a friend at my wedding; not to accuse, but to give me counsel; not to drive, but to draw; not to sink me into despair, but to lift me up to the wind, and make me ride upon it; not to reproach me, but to praise me; not to tell me what an awful rebel I had been, but what a saint I then was. Satan had changed his voice. And surely among them that are born of women there had not appeared a greater wonder than Parson Sack. I, not in the least suspecting this strange visitor to be one of the king of Babylon's ambassadors, was pleased with his coming as much as Hezekiah was, and shewed him all my precious things; for he came not with heavy tidings, but with smooth things; not as a destroyer, but as a builder up. He treated of the goodness and safety of my state; of the height of divine favour in which I stood, and of my certain arrival at the desired haven. From this he descended to the small number of God's elect; very small, when compared to the world at large. And as he preached, so he endeavoured to apply the doctrine. He worked his bottle-screw into my natural affections, and made my bowels sound. He set before me all my little ones, and my dame, as not included in the bond of the covenant; and then operated upon
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and influenced every tender feeling I had. My compassion, earnest desires, &c. &c. began to rise up and flow out at such a rate, just as Milton describes the lust of Adam and Eve working in them, after they had eaten the forbidden fruit, till they conceived it was now divinity springing up within them. And so I thought that my heart was filled with grace. Having worked me up to the highest pitch of natural affection for my wife and children, he then left the old hen and chicken, and led my mind abroad to my friends and relations; then to my old acquaintance; next to many tender-hearted, pitiful, and well-meaning people which I knew in the world. And still my heart enlarged, and, as he presented them to view, so I took them in. Then he came to the nations at large. Still my heart opened and extended as he brought them to bear upon my mind. Then the poor heathens were presented to my view, until my bowels sounded like an harp, not only for Moab, but for all these. And then the irrevocable decrees of God were set before me, just as they are set forth by the Arminians. And next the devils were presented to me as objects of my pity. And this last chamber of imagery discovered the cheat. Satan could no longer be hid; and I remembered his former fiery darts, and soon was delivered from this snare of the fowler. However, this was of use to me in the ministry; for from that time I knew most assuredly who it

was that instructed, furnished, equipped, and sent out, the whole herd of Arminian teachers; for sure I am that it is the devil transformed that supplies them all.

Some time after this he paid me another visit, similar to the last. At that time I was in the ministry. He came now as a parson-maker, to instruct me how to proceed in the important work; and that was, to draw no lines between saints and sinners; to make no applications; to enforce no marks, evidences, love-tokens, nor sure tokens; to insist upon no criterions, characteristics, infallible proofs, signs, nor touchstones; and then I should give no offence, nor should I raise any bars of prejudice against me, nor have any stigma fixed upon my character; my usefulness would be extensive, and my reputation a sweet favour to all. I should endeavour to cast my net so as to take in all that come within the walls of my meeting, and endeavour to win all to love me; and those who love a believer are "passed from death to life." This plan I intended to adopt. But, when I was in the work, the fire of zeal, of love, fervour, holy fear, boldness, and fortitude, flowed into me; so that, instead of saying, "A confederacy," I became a divider and scatterer wherever I went. The hypocrite hissed, and the honest soul felt the energy; and soon God led me to see this stratagem of the devil; and I learnt this lesson by it, that of all the workmen of God, and of all the works of God

under heaven, except the death of Christ, a minister of the Spirit, and the Holy Ghost's work on the souls of men, are the greatest enemies to Satan. He has no objection to external reformation, if there be no internal regeneration. It is the Holy Spirit that casts out the strong man armed, takes away his armour wherein he trusted, spoils his house, and takes the prey from the mighty. Having escaped this snare, through the good hand of my God upon me, he paid me one more visit in his counterfeit rays; at which time he set before me all the real and imaginary evils and dangers that would attend me in the perilous work of the ministry; the oppositions from the world, from heretics and hypocrites; the hunger, cold, and nakedness, that I was exposed to; the treachery of pretended friends; the difficult work of getting to be clear in the greatest mysteries of religion, and of escaping all errors; the danger of my life by the way, and of death at the end, in a hundred forms; together with the uncertainty of the Lord's presence, aid, and support, which he argued from the sad desertions which had lately befallen me. He then shewed me my own safety, the goodness of my state, and the happiness which would occur if I withdrew to some lonely place, and kept all the dealings of God with me locked up in my own breast. But, this not succeeding, he soon made good his predictions; for there was not a tool, falsely called a gospel minister, in town

or country, but what was barking, biting, warning or cautioning people against me. And this has continued, without intermission, for twenty-four years and upwards; and I should think it an ill omen should it cease, which I am in no fear or danger of, seeing the devil has stocked the nation with so many novices, whom he puffs up with pride till they fall under the same sentence that fell upon him.

The bowels of compassion and the inordinate affection that you felt for the child, and the rebellion against God that attended it, you may safely conclude were the effects of a visit from this transformed devil. For God is as well able to regenerate a child as a man; and can perform that good work in the last moment now, as well as in the thief upon the cross. "His hand is not shortened." Besides, you have no scripture to prohibit or forbid your praying for your child, nor yet for the life of the child, supposing you conclude with "Not my will, but thine be done." And, if we cannot say this from the heart, then we can pray for submission that we may do it. David fasted, cried, and prayed, all day and night long for his child, though God, by his prophet, had declared it should die. He prayed even against the revealed will of God. But your prayer would have been according to his will. This is plain, because the child is restored to you again, even without being prayed for.

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Your nice distinction between *jealousy* and *envy* I must leave to the learned. I believe that Rachel was provoked to jealousy at the fruitfulness of Leah, and thought that she stood higher in the divine favour than herself; and the consequence was, that she envied her sister. The apostles were provoked to jealousy when James and John craved their seats on the right and left hand of Christ in his kingdom; and the other ten were filled with indignation against the two brethren. But, you may reply, Wisdom says, "Who can stand before envy?" True. And in another breath she tells you what stirs it up: "Jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance." Solomon had learnt this by experience. God sent his prophet to Jeroboam to tell him that he should be king over ten tribes. This was a scourge to Solomon for his idolatry: and this provoked Solomon to such rage and jealousy that he sought to kill Jeroboam. The latter could not stand before the envy of the former, and therefore, to save his life, he fled into Egypt.

If thou wilt nurse, suckle, swaddle, prate, and preach, go on: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou canst not tell which shall prosper, either this or that," either the envious or the jealous; "or whether they shall both be alike good." But thou wilt be a better judge of this than thou now art when thy preaching season is over; for "there is
a time

a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak." Thou wast not very fit for the pulpit in this thy last high fit of the fever; but that was nothing, either in weight or duration, to that which is yet to come. Walking with the footmen wearied Jeremiah; but afterwards he was called to contend with horses: and, when he was tired out in a land of peace, he was ordered to cope with the swellings of Jordan. God will have us at his feet; and it is not a little crossing and trying that will bring us there, and keep us there. To be stripped of all comfort, and to be laid in irons for a whole year, and this attended with intolerable hardness of heart; to be left free among the dead, and be given up to the influence of a sleepy devil, who shall give you a dose of his opium under every prayer that is put up, and under every sermon that is preached; this, this will be worse than all the afflictions that have befallen little Isaac. So I conclude, and so you shall confess. Call it one more secret from the locks of Samson.

In the Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XVIII.

To NOCTUA AURITA, of the Desert.

THE language of my heart at this time is, Was ever one favoured with such a friend, counsellor, and guide, in this world before? There may be; but this I can be certain of, that there never was one so unworthy of it. Every epistle I receive from you knits and unites my heart more and more to you. O what a sweet bond is this which knits every member of Christ to each other, and to their head! Your last favour has unmasked Satan to my view in such a manner as must enrage him greatly. Little did I think that the inordinate affections, and the sounding of the bowels, came from him. I have felt something of it before, and do to this moment. O, my dear friend, pray for me, that I may have wisdom given me from above that I may not be ignorant of his devices! Never did I see him in so formidable a view before. Surely he desires to have me, that he may sift me as wheat; and, if the prayer of the great High Priest does not prevail on my behalf, I must fall by his temptations. Your epistle brought to remembrance many visits
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paid to me in his white robes during these six months past. O what praise is due to God for keeping me from falling by this snare of the fowler! I have had many of the lectures on election which you mention, and the doctrine applied, and his ends answered, in my last trial. Rebellion enough I felt. Safely he might withdraw for a season; he was sure he left me miserable enough. You have, indeed, prophesied of a dark path I have to travel, which has wrought some discouragement in my heart. I am sure you will be a true prophet in all your predictions, and not one word of all you have spoken shall fall to the ground. Satan seems to me to be the most dangerous when he comes to bloat up the soul with pride. And I have found him approach in this way when I have been much in the enjoyment of divine love, as Mr. Hart says,

The heart uplifts with God's own gift,
And makes even *grace* a *snare*.

I felt so much of this about seven months ago as made me abhor myself. This was a little before my journey to the Bower, when God met me by the way. Our dear pastor made an observation in the pulpit, about a week before I received your last favour, which struck me very forcibly. It was this: that pride goeth before the destruction of a sinner, and a haughty spirit before the fall of a saint; and

and observed, that it was the devil's aim to get us on this ground, and then he was sure to procure our fall. And your mentioning in yours the ways and means he makes use of to effect this, and that from your experience, was very seasonable to me ; and I found that " a word fitly spoken is as apples of gold in pictures of silver ;" for the Lord makes me to fear this more than any thing. I am sensible there can be no safety but at the feet of Jesus. But true it is, as you observe, it is not a little crossing and trying that will keep me there. I find I am wrong in my views of envy and jealousy. Pardon me, dear Sir ; I have, perhaps, spoken for want of light. But you are looking forward to a time when, you say, I shall be a better judge of it, even when my preaching time is over. Indeed, Sir, I aspire to no such things as preaching. As you say, prate I do, and that when I should keep silence, which is known by the effects, by its bringing on me hatred and envy instead of love. I am often brought into snares by my tongue, which is an unruly member ; and I have smarted both for my speaking and my keeping silence. But, if I am to be left free among the dead, laid in irons a whole year, and be given up to the sleepy devil, I believe my mouth will be shut with a witness. If any thing less than this would do it, I should be thankful.

However, I hope ever to have an interest in your prayers, and to be favoured with your correspondence,

respondence, which I feel are among my greatest privileges. Shall hope to hear from you very soon, and believe me to remain

Your very sincere and affectionate friend

in the bonds of the gospel,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XIX.

To PHILOMELA, of the King's Dale.

I HAVE long been to thee as a dumb man, in whose mouth are no reproofs, having been much engaged. But you know "there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;" and "there is a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing." You have been, upon your returning to your heavenly Father, embraced, enrobed, entertained, and adorned, and long indulged with the soul-reviving melody of "let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And this

this music and dancing hath long continued with thee, during which time I could only be a fellow-helper of your joy, or a furtherer of your joy of faith. But now, perhaps, "the elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music, the joy of our heart is ceased, our dance is turned into mourning." But, when the truth is received in the love of it; when the testimony is bound up in the heart by the bond of the everlasting covenant, which is God's eternal love in Christ Jesus accompanying the word of grace; then we are constrained, however coyly we might put it away before, we are constrained, I say, to embrace it. being attended with the comforting seal of assurance; for it comes "in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;" which seal ratifies, confirms, and makes the promise sure to all the seed. And then what remains? Why, the hand of faith is stretched out to subscribe the evidences, both that which is open, and that which is sealed; namely, the whole word of God, which appears open to us, and is yet to be fulfilled, and that which is sealed on our hearts, as being fulfilled already. And this setting to the seal is to be attended with the confession of the mouth unto salvation, without either an *if* or a *but* in it: "One shall say, I am the Lord's; another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Every one that
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sends a letter to another, giving an account of his deliverance, and of the assurance of his faith in Christ Jesus, subscribe with his hand to the honour and glory of God, as being faithful to his word, and rich in mercy. And he does no less who, believing in his heart, makes confession with his mouth unto salvation. While these things are carrying on in the soul, the good old wine flies about, and the glorious days of the Son of Man afford nothing but new love tokens, fresh or new discoveries; but, if they last never so long, and we "rejoice in them all," yet we must "remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many." How passive, resigned, composed, and tranquil, is the clay in the hand of the potter while the lump is formed into another vessel, in order to shew forth his praise! But O the evil days that have rolled over my head since! For many years did I keep looking back to the munitions of rocks, and to the views that I then had of the King in his beauty, and of the land that is very far off. But the bare and barren remembrance of them at last only made me lament my loss, and sometimes aggravated my misery; for, though I earnestly begged to have these restored, and to be upheld by his free Spirit, yet he appeared in this matter inflexible, as if it must not be so done in our country. But the following things abode with me; that is, a full persuasion that the work was genuine; a good hope of the great reward promised;

my mind completely rescued from the dark and dismal regions; nor did unappeased wrath and unatoned guilt ever enter my conscience, or sink my soul in the horrible pit afterward; though legal bondage and fatherly anger have often fell to my lot. But a good hope through grace counterpoises these, and keeps the soul at a par, or hanging at least in an even balance. The new birth, my sister, is to us the testimony of Jesus. "How can these things be?" saith Nicodemus. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." Where this change is made, wherever perfect love casts out fear and torment, there is the testimony of Jesus; and "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. xix. 10. Yea, an earnest of the future inheritance, the first fruits of the glorious harvest, or of the harvest of glory; and faith itself "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" and is attended with a train of forerunners which lead to perfect day. These things abide with us. But, alas! bonds and afflictions abide also; and these make such a medley of bitter-sweets, which are strange things to us. Now I shall expect to hear how you go on, and to have an honest account, whether any of my former predictions came to pass or not; or whether the oil of joy continues springing without any abatement; whether the banqueting-house affords the same profusion;

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whether the banner displayed is still in view ; and whether the same hearty welcome of " Eat, O friends ! drink ; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved ! " sounds still in thine ears, and attended with the same inward fulness and satisfaction as usual. In hope of a solution, I conclude, in the bonds of the better covenant,

Thine in Him,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XX.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I RECEIVED safe your kind favour, and kindly do I thank you for the same ; and glad I am to find you bear me on your mind. In compliance to your request, I take this opportunity of informing you of my spiritual welfare. I have not to inform you that I am in the banqueting-house : no ; those sweet seasons are over ; for my Beloved has withdrawn himself, and is gone, and
has

has left me a filly dove without an heart, as you warned me of in a former letter ; and I am going mourning without the fun. He has hid himself with a cloud in his anger, and my soul is melted because of trouble. He has taken the bag of money with him, and there seems to be a famine in the land, and I am in want. As you observe, the bare remembrance of those past seasons wherein I lived under his shadow, is only an aggravation of my misery. I well know now, and that by bitter experience, the truth of your former predictions, much of them having been fulfilled during these two months past ; and none but God himself could have supported me in the perilous path I am called to walk in. I have been brought so low as almost to cast away my confidence ; though, in my joys, I have said, numbers of times, I was sure I should never be shaken with respect to my state. But this language is purged from me by very sharp strokes. Indeed, I have sometimes a little light given me, from the word, that the path I am brought into is the path of tribulation that leads to the kingdom ; and a little light God has given me lately by a very particular dream. God still instructs me by dreams and visions of the night. Some part of it is now fulfilling, and some part remains to be fulfilled ; and much does God lead me to watch his hand, which is with me at this time. It would carry me far beyond the limits of a letter to give you a particular account of God's

dealing with me; and perhaps it is God's will that I should keep his dealings with me to myself. I am sure I have wished a thousand times lately I had never opened my mouth to any one about the work of God with me. I know it has involved me in many snares. However, nothing teaches like experience. I have been a little strengthened by those words in Job xxvi. 2, 3, wherein he says of God, "How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm that hath no strength? How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?" I am brought most sensibly to feel my want of help, power, strength, and wisdom; and I never so saw before my need of Christ in his office as a *counsellor*; and it strengthened me a little that he is styled by the prophet the Wonderful Counsellor. I think never did a poor soul stand more in need of his help, in all his offices and characters, than I do at this present time. Those lines of Mr. Hart's are duly applicable to me:

Weaker than the bruised reed,
Help I every moment need.

I hope still to be favoured with an interest in your prayers, that I may be kept, guided, and directed in all spiritual wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, and preserved unto his heavenly kingdom;

kingdom; and may the best of spiritual blessings continually be vouchsafed to you, is the prayer of

Your truly affectionate sister

in the bonds of the gospel,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XXI.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

I AM still kept looking out at my study window, with my heart not a little set on my intended journey to the King's dale. But my weak state of body, and the long, miserable, wet season, not a little discourages me. I long to see and know how you all go on. I am just like an old hen, which hath got more chickens than she can cover with her feathers; for my thoughts are all over the nation, and I am always afraid of the hawks and kites. But this is indulging fear where no fear is; for under his feathers his children shall trust; his truth shall be their shield and

buckler. I want to see the King's herald; for, if I do not see nor hear from him every four or five days, all is not right. O, when shall that happy time arrive, and that blessed mansion be inhabited, where "the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick!" where those dismal changes from cold to hot, from dry to wet, shall be no more; nor the soul be clogged any more with this worst of burdens, a crazy tabernacle, and a body of death. I sit, and fret, and grieve, to see the weather so bad, and myself so weak and feeble; my thoughts can fly, but I am still in the study. What a sensible weight is the body to a soul enlarged! The one is all over heaven, earth, and hell; and the other quite immoveable; always incapable, more or less, of executing the soul's inventions. The elephant and the greyhound, the dove and the swine, never were more unequally matched than a body of flesh and blood, and a soul born from above. I decree many things, but they are not established unto me; I purpose, but my purposes are broken off. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." It is a blessing that God works in us to will, seeing he often accepts the will for the deed, as he did the will of Abraham at the offering of Isaac, and the goodwill of David respecting building the temple. But it is a grief to me that so excellent a couple should ever be absent from each other. Willing and doing are not always hand in hand. The former is

generally found, but the latter is not. To will is present, says Paul, but not the doing. Perhaps the reason may be this: the devil cannot hinder us from willing, but he often hinders us from doing. "I was coming once and again," says Paul, "but Satan hindered." Again: I can will without the body, but the body is often wanted in performing; and, like Pharaoh's wheels, draws heavily, when the soul, like the chariot of Aminadib, or like Jehu, drives furiously. O this frail tabernacle, this busy devil, and this wretched law in the members! I must conclude in this strait between two; and these two make me often waddle. I am ready to halt, and my sorrows are continually before me.

Ever thine,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XXII.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert,

WE received safe your last favour; and I was sorry at the account of your indisposition. Hope it has pleased the Lord ere this to have restored you to health again. Hope you will again have your health established. With respect to myself, I find the world, and every thing in it, is against me, besides the flesh and the devil. But the worst of all calamities that ever befell me is, that God hath hid his blessed face from me. He has fenced up my ways that I cannot pass; he has set darkness in all my paths; he hideth himself with a cloud in his anger; and at times I am ready to fear he is gone for ever, and never will return more. I at present can find no book suit me better than your "Child of Liberty in legal Bondage." It is my companion; and sometimes I think you must have wrote that book on purpose for me, that I might not quite sink under my present distress. Your last letter is a composition of the same bitter ingredients, which you have brought forth from your own experience, not only your former, but your present sensations under
your

your present trial. Pardon me if I tell you I tried to suck some sweetness from it. And it has encouraged me a little to hope that I may be brought through; for these have been my companions by day and by night, for these five months past; and I really do believe that I am not near through this perilous path. O, my dear friend, had I but attended to the sound advice you gave me in the second letter you wrote to me, it had been better with me at present than it is, and that was, to keep secret the dealings of God with me, and watch every advance he made towards me, and then, you told me, I should have rejoicing in myself alone! But I have been wiser in my own eyes than seven men that could render a reason. I was not then aware that self was working at the bottom of all; and I find true that saying of the wise man, "A man's pride shall bring him low." And low I am at present, and as fast in the cords of legal bondage as ever a poor soul was. You say, in the book that is my companion, in this cloudy and dark day to be favoured with faith in exercise, but one minute, enough to banter the enemy, and predict a future sun rising, is a blessing indeed. This has been the case with me two or three times during the first five months, when God was pleased to shine with a ray of light on a part of his word, and give me to see something of the end for which he was thus dealing with me. But now it seems to be taken from me, and I have had nothing of that

that for these three months past ; though I can say, with you, that I do not feel unappeased wrath or unatoned guilt work in my conscience. These ingredients are not in my cup, which were in my former bondage. But severely do I feel the cruel flames of jealousy burn with a most vehement heat. Nor did I know that it was an ingredient that worked in the heart under a spirit of bondage till I read it in the book my companion. The Tuesday evening you came to my house you seemed to come as a prophet sent of God, and did predict to me the coming of him whom my soul loveth. But the language of my heart, though I did not utter it with my mouth, was the same as the Shunamite's to Elisha, " Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid ;" which was the effect of unbelief in her, and in me ; and, indeed, I am so under the power of unbelief, that I cannot give credit to any thing but what seems to make against me. But certainly true it is, that since that time the darkness has gathered thicker upon me, and I am holden faster in my fetters than I was before, but no light to see where I am. And nothing but almighty power can rend the veil, and bring me forth from this captivity the second time. It will be matter of comfort to know if God lays my case near your heart. I hope you will never cease to pray for me. And do, my dear friend, make it your petition to God that he would be pleased to shine upon the work he has done upon
me

me by his own Spirit, that I may not be deceived in this matter, and take the work of Satan for the work of the Spirit of God ; for I must tell you I have not light to see the place from whence I did fall ; and I know it is only God that can discover this to me. This is a confused jumble. I am almost ashamed to send it to you ; but hope you bear with me and pardon me ; for I am so dark, and feel my mind so confused, that I am not able to express my own feelings. Accept my thanks for all your kind favours bestowed on one so unworthy ; and, if God should give you any thing to send me, I shall be exceeding glad to receive it, and likewise to hear how your health is at present ; and believe me to remain

Your very sincere and affectionate friend

and afflicted sister,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XXIII.

To *PHILOMELA*, in the King's Dale.

THINE epistle came safe to hand, favouring sweetly of a second benefit. Refreshings from the presence of the Lord attended it. It was a rich perfume. His name, like an ointment poured forth, came with it. Our unbelief shall never make the faith of God without effect; for, if we believe not, he still abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself. Moreover, God will honour his own ministering servants, whom he knows honour him; nor will he let their word fall to the ground; for he will confirm the word of his servants, and perform the counsel of his messengers. The work of God on the souls of his people shall abide for ever. He will carry on the good work begun; he will perfect that which concerns us, and never forsake the work of his own hands. And now, as God has hitherto fulfilled all that I have predicted to thee, and hath made me manifest in thy conscience, and hath given thee a place in my heart to live and die with thee, which joining and knitting together is the work of God's Spirit alone, and is always attended with the bands
of

of peace and love; by strengthening of which bands the Lord is pleased to communicate nourishment to supply every joint, that the whole body may increase, and edify itself in love; it is from this work that Wisdom receives her revenue; all his tributes of praise and thanksgiving spring from hence. He reaps no harvest but from what he sows; no fruits but from his own plantation. With this work he is particularly and more immediately concerned; for, in carrying on this, all his attributes are engaged; and by the faithful and true Witness it will be performed and perfected, that God may display the riches of his grace in glory by Christ Jesus. Now, that thou mayest know what the various branches of this good work are, and not be wholly ignorant of it, and that thou mayest have somewhat to answer any person who shall appear to glory, but not in heart; I will drop thee a few hints about it, and leave thee to consider the matter, and to compare notes. I mean to compare spiritual things with spiritual; that is, spiritual works within with spiritual words in the book. And, if we take heed to these things, and cleanse our way according to his word, we shall come to a point; for whatsoever the Spirit of God wrote on the hearts of his apostles and prophets, he, by those instruments, wrote the same in the Bible; and an exact copy of it is written on the fleshly tables of all believing hearts; and, when this is done, the quickening

Spirit makes us feel the impression, and afterwards shines gradually upon the word; that we may see that the internal impression exactly agrees with the external revelation. And, when the contents on the paper tally with the impression on the heart, then we are the pillars and ground of the truth, and may safely conclude that the mercy of God in Christ Jesus shall be built up for ever, and, in the glorification of our souls and bodies, "truth shall be settled in heaven." The unction on our souls is two-fold: love and joy are the effects of the anointing within; and the anointing our eyes with eye-salve is done that we may see, in the word, what he has done on the heart; and that anointing "teacheth us all things, and is true, and is no lie." And, as he hath taught us, we shall abide in him; that is, we shall ever abide in the favour, and under the operations, of the holy Spirit of promise, that the offering of us up may be acceptable, we being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Now for a few hints upon those things which God calls his own work. He says, "I am the Lord which search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men." And this work you have an account of by the prophets. "I will search Jerusalem as with candles, and will punish the men that are settled on their lees." In allusion to this our Lord called the apostles the light of the world; and asks whether candles were lighted up to be put under a bushel; and tells them to let
their

their light shine before men. And by these he searched Jerusalem, as you see in Peter's audience, who, when cut to the heart, cried out, " Brethren, what shall we do ?" The things for the which they were reprov'd were made manifest by the light which did appear ; for " whatsoever doth make manifest is light." And, when the elect of God among that people were searched into, searched out, and looked up, he then punished the rest that were settled upon their lees of self-righteousness. Another branch of this work of the Lord is, to give us a sight, as well as a feeling sense, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin ; for so he says, " I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee. Now, consider this, ye that forget God." This is done to make us the more sensible of our pardon when it comes, after we have been sufficiently humbled and brought down. The purging of our guilt and filth is called removing the burden ; and chasing our sin from before the eyes of our mind, is termed a blotting out our transgressions as a cloud ; for, as it is sin that separates from God, purging them is making us nigh by the blood of Christ ; and so it follows, " I have blotted out thy transgressions as a cloud ; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." But to return. Under this convincing and convicting work a kind of legal process is carried on between God and the sinner, in which God appears both judge and witness, as you read : " And I will
come

come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against forcerers, against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, and turn aside the stranger from his right, and that fear not me, saith the Lord." The law is sent home to conscience, and we are summoned to appear at the bar of equity. "Come," saith God, "and let us reason together;" for that is all we are capable of while, in the glass of the law, our sins appear as scarlet and crimson, which sets forth their deep stain and dreadful dye. And here he holds us under this fiery trial till our mouths are stopped, our souls humbled, and we become altogether guilty before God. And, when he has stripped us of all our false coverings, he makes us willing, in the day of his power, to be saved in his own way. And here we stand willing enough to be saved, and put our mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. But "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Nevertheless, under all this sharp exercise God supports us; which is called instructing us with a strong hand, that we may dare to be singular, and not say, "A confederacy" to any enemy of the truth, or stranger to the power of it. When God hath thus chastened us, and taught us out of his law, he then gives us rest from the days of adversity, by leading us to the foundation that he hath laid in Zion, which is called the rock higher than we. Hence the Saviour's assertion, "It is written, And they shall

affections, and crucifies us to this world. And this is fulfilling his ancient promise: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Thus we are taught of God, and then led to his dear Son, and transplanted into him, in whom we find righteousness and strength, which constitutes us trees of righteousness, the right-hand planting of God, that he may be glorified. This, my sister, is the good work of God upon the soul. To a lively hope he begets us; and from the piercing sting of death, from under the ministration of death, and from bondage to the fear of death, he brings his own children; for so it is written, "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Psalm lxxviii. 20. From death in the law to life in Christ do they pass by faith; and upon Christ, as upon a nail fastened in a sure place, do all the offspring and issue hang their hopes, their expectations, their hearts, with all their burdens, for time and eternity. Read Isaiah xxii. 24. The next thing is, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." And now what remains? That every branch in Christ his heavenly Father purges, that it may bring forth more fruit. And under this purging operation thou wast when my former letter found thee. And thus have I pursued thee, and I have overtaken thee.

thee. And now, seeing this is God's work and way, humbly submit thyself under his hand, and attend to these things a little more, and visit less; and thou shalt reap the benefit of it. Compare thy state with this account, and comfort thyself with these things; for my God will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. My kind love to your spouse. God preserve and bless you both. Amen and amen, says

Thy ready servitor,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XXIV.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I CAN no longer be silent in acknowledging your last kind favour, and telling you that it came not to me empty. O the goodness of my God to me, such a wretched, unworthy creature! Well might the apostle say, "What manner of love is this that is bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!"

But I must begin and tell you where your letter found me; though I confess it will make my letter appear more like a journal than a letter. I was contending with the Almighty to his face, and telling him, it was in vain to wait on him, or look to him for that which I was seeking for; and that he knew he had killed me to all but himself, on purpose to aggravate my misery. I likewise called his prophets liars, and said they had prophesied only what they wished might come to pass; but he knew he never put such things in their mouths. Many times did I read your letters, and God wrought by his Spirit with them, so that I felt my hard heart melt, in some degree, under the power and light that attended the contents to my soul, and contrition and godly sorrow began to operate, and I had a view of the goodness of the Lord to me in keeping me from getting from under his hand, and going where those fled you mentioned. This made my very soul to melt within me. This was the language of my heart, "O Lord, keep me under thy chastening hand as long as thou seekest best for me; choose my path for me; help me to put my mouth in the dust, and to bear thy indignation; because I have sinned against thee. Only let me never find any soul satisfaction in any thing but in the enjoyment of his blessed presence." Thus I was Friday and Saturday. On sabbath morning I found my mind cloudy and dark. I saw where his excellency was;
for,

for, very far from the spot I stood upon, I could not bear the rays of his countenance; for surely the face of Moses never shone brighter than his did at that time; and never sure was a soul more burnt in the flames of jealousy than I was. I am sure my feelings could never be equalled but by Satan himself. I had been basking in the rays of God's presence, and now cast down to the lowest hell without a gleam of hope. And, besides this, what further added to my jealousy, I saw the dew sweetly distil on two persons who sat near me. I knew they had found him whom my soul loveth. But on Monday morning he did come indeed, and gave me such a view of his love and faithfulness to his word, oath, and covenant, as my pen nor tongue can never describe. Your prediction was indeed fulfilled; for he came down on my soul as the dew on the mown grass, and as the rain that waters the earth. And such a time in prayer did my soul never experience before. He admitted me into his very heart, and his language to me seemed the same as the king's to Esther, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request? and it shall be granted thee, not only to the half, but the whole of my kingdom." But I found I wanted another enlargement, that I might ask enough; for I saw there was no straitness in God. And the Lord knows what I did ask at this time, for I know not. But, whatever it was, I shall know hereafter; for nothing can be impossible

to this faith. However, in a few hours I found my mind clouded again, and Satan was permitted to assault and suggest to my mind that it was not real, and that I was catching at something I could not hold fast. But these words settled and decided the matter, "It is the voice of my Beloved: behold, he cometh leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills." And a sweet peace I found in my soul. However, before the day was past, I felt my mind again beclouded, and my soul disturbed, and Satan suggesting that it was not real; but the above words were attended again, the second time, with power, and kept vibrating through my very soul for, I believe, two hours; and the matter was made clear to me that I was not deceived. On Tuesday morning the Lord met me again in prayer; and, I bless his name, he renewed the same over again, as he did the morning before; and sweetly did he commune with my soul; and he has brought me to sit at his feet, clothed, and in my right mind, and has told me, that "he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure;" and that he will lead me into the mysteries of it, for the half has not been told me; and never before did I feel such contrition and godly sorrow. It has killed me outright, and, as you say in one of your letters, bleeds my very soul to death. O how much do I need your prayers, that I may be kept near him, that I may not be carried away!

away ! for Satan will use all his efforts to get me again into his sieve. I have communicated this to no soul living but yourself, thanking you for all favours. I know you are wise as an angel of God ; therefore, if you see any thing in this letter that is not produced under the influence of the Spirit of God, fail not to communicate it to me as soon as you can ; for I have reason to be afraid of all my joys. If it should be proved they be false, please to keep the contents of this secret ; for, if they know I am up again, they will be trying to make me the keeper of their vineyards, which, perhaps, would be attended with a neglect of my own. Indeed, at present, I want no conversation with any body ; I am so afraid of losing what I have got. Adieu.

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XXV.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I HAVE been expecting a letter from you every day for this month past, and have felt much at your long silence. Satan has endeavoured to help the matter forward, and has suggested to me what, perhaps, never entered your head. But he is not worth spending any time about; so I will not say any thing more about him, but proceed to tell my dear friend that, since I wrote you last, I have experienced a sweet gale from the south wind, which, for a time, carried all that was not mortal within the veil, and left me nothing but the poor frail tabernacle here below, and even that felt the effects of it so much that it was hardly able to sustain it. Indeed, my dear brother, I hardly knew, for some time, whether in the body, or out of the body; and, had it been the will of my God, glad should I have been to have taken my eternal flight, and left mortality behind. But I am fully persuaded that is not to take place yet; because it is given me to believe that it is appointed for me to bear no small part of the burden and heat of the day; and I am to

stand in many of the Lord's battles. But, however weak I am, he will teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight; and I trust that no weapon that is formed against me shall prosper; because I know all my enemies are his enemies. I had, three nights ago, a very particular dream, which I well know came from God, and will, I have no doubt, have its accomplishment; and, as you are one of the parties concerned, I will make bold to trouble you with the relation of it. I dreamed I was standing in an open road; you came up to me, and conversed with me for about a quarter of an hour, when you turned from me and went out of my sight. You was no sooner gone than there came up to me a middle-aged woman, very comely in her appearance. She had on a long white robe; she had a soft, smooth, smiling countenance; and very pleasant did she look at me; but I saw the very devil under that robe. I trembled at her appearance till my very joints shook; for I perceived she had very evil designs against me. She very minutely surveyed me from head to foot. I therefore took my garments and girded them round me as tight as possibly I could, and stood trembling before her, as I thought her intention was to rob me. I had not stood long before you came to me the second time; which when she saw, she turned, and went out of my sight. You conversed with me as before, though I do not recollect any thing of the conversation.

I secretly

I secretly wished you not to leave me, as I knew the flatterer was at no great distance; but I did not ask you. You turned and went out of my sight again; and no sooner was you gone, but this woman came up to me again, but somewhat nearer. I felt the same sensations as before, and, as before, took my garments, and girt them round me with all the strength I had, and stood trembling before her, expecting her to fall on me. I wished for you to come again; but you came no more. This was done three times; and I believe with my trembling I awoke. What it all means I must leave to God and future discovery; but sure I am, by the repetitions of the dream, and by my strange feelings under it, that some sore trial awaits me. I know that the church of Rome, and all false churches, as well as the foolish virgins, are called women, and are set forth as very gaudy and gay in their dress, as this woman was; and I believe it is the business and delight of such persons to rob the children of God. But who can take away the garment of imputed righteousness, or lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? My garment I wrapt close round me; and I believe it is faith that puts this robe on, and keeps it close. However, suffer we must; and, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;" for our consolations are as sure as our sufferings. The Lord promises strength equal to the day; and, if so, I shall stand and withstand.

My

My other three succeeding epistles you told me drew some secrets from your heart; and I am sure they did my soul good; and, as this is the third since you wrote me, I hope these will do the same again. I saw the herald last night, and he was as well as usual. Hope this will meet you and your family well. Believe me to remain

Your affectionate friend and sister

in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XXVI.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

HAVING a little leisure time upon my hands, I am inclined to write to thee, having a desire to know how thou dost. But which way to steer my course, so as to find thee, is the difficult task that I have undertaken. In my former
epistles

epistles I always went before thee by the spirit of prophecy ; and, as thou camest after, thou didst set to thy seal that the word of the Lord was true. But, moving from my old habitation, and the troubles which have attended it, have so interrupted our correspondence, that I know not where thou art. However, I will pursue the footsteps of the flock ; and I have no doubt but I shall overtake thee, either in the vallies, or in the heights of Israel.

To go back to the days of thy dispersion, when thou wast stumbling upon the dark mountains, must be altogether vain. The Shepherd's promise to thee in that state hath been fulfilled : " I will seek my sheep, and search them out ; and I will gather them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark days." From these dismal and dark regions he hath put thee forth, and gone before thee, and caused thee to pass under the rod, and to hear his voice ; and he hath led thee into the bond of the covenant, that thou mightest be bound up in the bundle of life with the chief Shepherd. This is the summit of all happiness, the height of Zion's dignity, the high mountain and the eminent on which so many have said, " I shall never be moved ; thou, Lord, of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong." Upon this eminence he carries the lambs in his bosom, as well as leads gently those that
are

are with young. The former feel the warmth of his heart, the latter the strength of his arm. But it is vexatious, grievous, yea, and dangerous, coming down from this mount; because the horrible pit and the miry clay are so near to the foot of it, one of old tumbled into it: "I stick fast; I am come into the deep waters, so that the floods overflow me." This stiffened his joints, and relaxed his nerves, and made him stagger and waddle in his walk. "I am ready to halt, and my sorrows are continually before me." This being put out of the bosom, and driven from the suckling-house, and turned adrift to go behind, and only now and then allowed to hear the Shepherd's voice, and being bid to follow him instead of riding in the bosom, appears to be hard treatment. However, he always heals them that halt, binds up that which is broken, and feeds that which is faint: "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Thus to lie down and find rest and satisfaction, encompassed and supported by the lively oracles, or life-giving words of promise, and to be led by the streams which flow from the river of divine pleasure, makes us fat and flourishing. But, alas! these vanish again, and we lose sight of these waters: "I am a stranger with thee; hide not thy commandment

commandment from me. O, when wilt thou come and comfort me!" Here the old man, and the sheep's worst enemy, entangle him; he is hung up: "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; O bring thou me out of my distresses!" Out he comes again: "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities, and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy. Thou hast set my feet in a large room." But he soon wanders out of this into the desert, and gets upon the barren mountains of Sinai, and here gets both blinded and impoverished: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments." What part of this path of tribulation my sister is now on, or which of these footsteps of the flock suits her present steps, I know not; but, when I saw her last, she was shut up, and could not come forth; and, when I informed her of a future enlargement, her answer agreed with that of her sister of old, "Nay, thou man of God, do not lie to thine handmaid;" for I shall never be comfortable any more in this world. Has experience, from that time to this, proved that saying to be true? or did the Lord confirm the word of his servant, and perform the counsel of his messenger?

Once more: Hast thou found, in the course of thy

thy pilgrimage, any thing to confirm that common saying of many, namely, that those who, by the Spirit, are brought once into liberty, are never exercised with, nor entangled in, legal bondage again? or whether this bondage be not one ingredient in the cup of Zion's sorrow, which all must drink of, more or less, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth? A solution of these matters will lay me under an obligation, which shall be acknowledged with that thankfulness which I hope will ever abound in

Your affectionate friend and brother,

From the Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XXVII.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I RECEIVED your kind letter, and am obliged to you for your kind inquiry after my spiritual welfare. Your letter found me in the footsteps of the flock; though I must tell you it
did

did not find me on the heights of Zion. I am got on the barren mountains of Sinai; and my soul is as the mountains of Gilboa, without either dew or rain: therefore these words of David suit me, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant:" for I can say also, with him, that I do not forget God's commandments. Since I wrote to you last, which is now more than four months, I have been led in a strange path. If you recollect, I wrote to you just before the Lord had granted me that second enlargement from the bondage in which I had lain for five months. This was a sweet revival of the work. But, alas! gradually did those sweet sensations on my soul wither, and down from the mount I came before I was aware; and for two months I had not the least light on the path I was in; only I knew what I had lost. Nor could I get any help from the sanctuary, nor strength out of Zion; and, for want of light, I could not describe my strange feelings to any one; yet I was not in deep distress all this time, though I knew I was not comfortable. However, I was sure it was a path I had not been in before. But, about a month ago, under one of the orations of his Majesty's herald, the Lord was pleased to shine with a ray of light while he was describing a speech of my great great grandmother's, recorded in the annals of antiquity; where she says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh." In a moment I was given to see that I was in the same

same case, and her prayer was that moment mine; and from my heart I could say, "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." Ever since the Lord brought me into the liberty of the gospel, these words have perplexed me, why the venerable spouse should wish to awake the north wind. But I believe I know the secret now; for I had rather be under the influence of that gale than to lie wind-bound, which is my case at present. But, upon this discovery of my state, my beloved seemed to put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. This seemed, in a measure, to rouse me from my spiritual lethargy, and a little fervour was communicated to my spirit, which enabled me to arise and open to my beloved. But, as it fared with her of old, so it does with me; for my beloved has withdrawn himself, and is gone; I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer; and, since that time, I have lost that little fervour I then found on my spirit, so that I have no heart to seek him. But the light which discovers where I am remains still with me. This is my present state; and how long I am to lie at anchor I know not; but I do not, at present, feel the least breeze from the everlasting hills to fill the sails. I feel this a sad case indeed, and can find no access to God; no faith in exercise to plead his word of promise at a throne.

of grace. Therefore, if you see my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.

The questions you ask a solution of are not (I am sure) for your own information; but, whatever your motive may be, I am bound, from a grateful sense of my obligations to you, to answer any question you shall ask, if it lies in my power; and I hope I shall ever bear my testimony against such a lie as that, viz. that the believer, after being once brought into the liberty of the gospel, is never entangled again in legal bondage; my own experience is point blank against it. Therefore I know that those who assert such things know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. For I am sure this is the third time that I have been in legal bondage since the Lord was pleased to proclaim liberty to my soul, which is but two years come next week; and I think my wanderings have been something similar to those of the prophet Elijah, when he went a day's journey in the wilderness. I have always been made to experience the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, before I have been favoured with the still small voice which has brought me back again; and have been made as bitter in my spirit as was the prophet, when he sat under the juniper-tree, and requested of the Lord that he might die, though he knew it was contrary to God's will. Moreover, I am in a strait to know what this can be. I know it is the effect of legal bondage; and I

have felt it as keen and as galling since my deliverance as I did before, only with this difference (as you observed to me in a former letter), " that unappeased wrath, and unatoned guilt, are not mixed with it."—But I must conclude with thanking you kindly for all favours, and begging a continuance of them, attended with an interest in your prayers for me, that I may be kept from every snare that Satan may spread for my feet, and that the Lord would condescend to visit me again, and restore to me the joys of his salvation, and uphold me with his free Spirit, that the wilderness and the solitary place may be made glad and flourish, and the desert blossom as the rose. Then joy and gladness will be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody, and not till then. My partner joins in kind respects. Believe me to remain, as much as ever,

Your affectionate friend and sister

in the Lord Jesus,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XXVIII.

To PHILOMELA, of the King's Dale.

I HAVE paid several visits this week, both to you on the hill, and to those in the valley, only I was absent in body; so that my appearance was imperceptible; somewhat like that of the beloved standing behind the wall, and shewing himself through the lattice. Whether any troubles have happened to either of your families, I know not; but you have been much on my mind when I have been secretly engaged in that greatest, best, most blessed, and most glorious privilege that ever perishing sinners were favoured with.

Private prayer is my court visits to my God, the life and breath of my soul; it is the ascension of the soul to the Almighty, and its returns are the descension of Christ to the soul's help. It is the assuasion of grief, the easement of a burdened heart, and the vent of a joyful one. It is the rich savour of mystical incense, the overflowings of a living fountain, an all-prevailing sacrifice, the delight of the Almighty, and a ravishing charm to the heavenly bridegroom.

Prayer

Prayer has made the Sun of Righteousness to stand still in his firmament, though discharged from the lips of a blind beggar. It has brought the Ancient of Days to dwell in a bush; and even a worm, by this simple mean, has held the King of kings in the galleries; yea, Omnipotence itself has been constrained to say, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." But dust and ashes replied, "I will not, except thou bless me." And he blessed him there, and allowed that himself had been conquered, and styled his antagonist a prevailer with God. Thus Judah's Lion was overcome, and the lame duck waddled off with the victory.

Prayer is a defence against the spirit of this world, and a guard against the inroads of vanity; it is a maul upon the head of the old man, and a lash of scorpions for the devil.

Prayer is a bridle in the jaws of a persecutor, a spell to a voracious enemy, a dagger at the heart of a heretic, a key to parables and dark sayings, and a battering-ram on the walls of salvation. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Prayer opens the bountiful hand of God, opens the door of mercy, keeps Christ in the throne of our affections, and covers every rival and usurper with shame and confusion of face.

Prayer is my royal-exchange, where I have brought thousands of cares, burdens, snares, troubles, vexations, temptations, doubts, fears, misgiv-

ings of heart, sorrows of mind, fainting fits, unbelieving fits, fits of love-sickness, fits of carnal and spiritual jealousy, hardness of heart, rebellion of heart, and ingratitude of heart; together with every other disorder, as the leprosy, the evil of the heart, the plague of the heart, and the plague of the head; together with deaf ears, blind eyes, feeble knees, languid hands, halting feet, and a stiff neck; with many oppositions, persecutions, false charges, slanderous accusations, and vile reproaches; and have, by this simple mean, got rid of them all at times. I have gone to this change with all sorts of devils, as an unclean devil, a false preaching devil, a blasphemous devil, a reforming devil, a furious devil, a fawning devil, and a sleepy devil, and have left them in the hands of him that could manage them, when my strength has been all gone, and self-despair has seized me. All these, and thousands more, have I taken to this royal-exchange; and you know that one of the names of a believer is that of an exchanger (Matt. xxv. 27); and I have received in return thousands of kisses, blessings, mercies, and deliverances; many refreshings, renewings, revivals, restorations, and returns of comfort, peace, love, and joy; together with fresh discoveries, love tokens, wholesome truths, profound mysteries, glorious glimpses, bright prospects, terrestrial views, undoubted evidences, infallible proofs, heavenly lessons, confirming visits, conspicuous deliverances, earnest,

earnests, pledges, and foretastes, reviving cordials, precious promises, or bank notes, payable this day, and every day through life, and even to millions of ages after date, signed, sealed, and delivered, by Jehovah himself: and God knows, and conscience too, that I lie not.

Prayer has scattered many confederate enemies of my soul, marred the schemes of Jacobins, frustrated the tokens of liars, and made diviners mad. It counteracts the designs of Satan and his dear children; it hath made me the enemy of the world, the rival of impostors, the envy of hypocrites, an eyesore to the devil, an admiration to perishing sinners, a spectacle to the world, and a wonder to myself. "He that prays to his Father, that seeth in secret, shall be rewarded openly."

By prayer the poor come up from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, and get a seat among the princes of God's people, and an inheritance in the throne of glory. Mental prayer hath brought me from sleeping in a barn to a comfortable lodging, from a lodging to a cottage, from a cottage to a house, and from a house to a little farm; it hath brought food for my need, apparel for my use, furniture for my dwelling, fuel to my hearth, money to my pocket, and faithful friends to my heart, and hath kept my pot boiling almost thirty years. "For all these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do these things for them." Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Prayer brought me from the coal-barge to a pulpit, from being a servant of servants to be a ruler in the Lord's household; it delivered my hands from the shovel, and my shoulders from the sacks.

Yea, earnest desires hath raised four houses of prayer for God, and brought the presence of God into the houses; it hath brought living waters to my well, oil to my cruse, joy to my heart, and a blessing to many souls. And what shall I say more? Why, prayer hath brought little animals to my fields, living creatures to my yard, a horse for my use, when the King's business requires haste, and a vehicle at my command in inclement weather. This has caused the very abjects to gather together about me, and the eyes of the envious to look on me, who have seen it, and grieved, grudged, and gnashed, and wandered up and down, and gone round the walls of my dwelling grinning like a dog. "No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Prayer hath brought the souls of some, when departed, back into their bodies again. It engages the Almighty on the side of the suppliant, and establishes an alliance with God. It hath stopped the bottles of heaven for three years and six months, and opened them again at the expiration of that term; yea, and brought a miraculous plenty into the house of a poor widow, while destruction and famine were riding all around in universal triumph,

triumph. " All things are possible to him that believeth ; " " and whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Prayer hath brought health to the sick, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, eyes to the blind, life to the dead, salvation to the lost ; and even driven the devil himself from the heart of many, and brought the God of heaven to dwell in his room.

Prayer is pouring out the soul before God, and shewing him our troubles ; it is casting our cares upon him that careth for us, and our burdens upon him in whom we are to say we have righteousness and strength ; it is opening to our well-beloved, opening our minds, our hearts, and our mouths, to him who tells us to let him hear our voice, and see our faces, the one being sweet, and the other comely. This is besieging an everlasting kingdom, moving the throne of grace, and coming with a treble rat-tat at the door of mercy. In prayer we must take no denial, if we have but a feeling sense of our wants, a scriptural warrant to go upon, or one promise to plead ; we must sue, argue, reason, plead, supplicate, intercede, confess, acknowledge, thank, bless, praise, adore, repeat, importune, observe, take hold of, and turn every thing that we can to our own advantage, so as we can but get something for the soul. Sensible sinners, that are poor and needy, have gotten many invitations, encouragements, precedents, promises,

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the covenant, the oath of God, the merits of Christ, and all his covenant engagements, undertakings, and performances ; the covenant characters that he sustains, his incarnation, and near relationship to us ; together with all the glorious train of divine perfections found in the proclamation of the name of God to Moses ; for they all harmonize and shine in Christ crucified. Thus far I had written in this second epistle, my dear sister, when your last letter came to hand. I see where you are, and will endeavour to point it out to you.

And now observe : when God the Father is about to bring us, as his chosen children, to his dearly beloved Son, that we may be openly and experimentally espoused to him, he comes near to us in a broken law, as it is written, " Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teacheest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, till the pit be digged up for the wicked." This rest from the days of adversity is to be found only in Christ Jesus. He is our rest and our refreshing ; and this rest Christ promises to them that are weary and heavy laden. This lading is sin, guilt, and wrath ; and this labouring, and being weary of it, is our fruitless toil under the legal yoke ; for the law works wrath and death in us, and this is truly hard labour ; and, as we have no success in it, we faint, and get weary of it. This, my sister, is our heavenly Father's teaching ; and so saith the Saviour,

Saviour, " It is written, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me; and he that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." When Christ espouseth us, he doth five things for us; but, antecedent to this, God, by the application of the law, makes us feel our need of them all. When the law comes home, the

First thing that it does is to discover our filthiness. " By the law is the knowledge of sin;" and sin by the law becomes exceeding sinful.

2dly. The curse of the law, and the wrath of God, pierce through the poor breastplate of all self-righteousness, which convinces us that we are unrighteous in the sight of God.

3dly. It discovers and stirs up our carnal enmity, " The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be."

4thly. The law fills us with fear and torment, and leaves us in bondage to it. And,

5thly, It discovers our blindness and our ignorance, and makes the old veil, that is upon our hearts a darkness that may be felt. Such a soul, and no other, is a fit object for Christ to embrace; and, under these circumstances, God leads us to him, as he did Eve to the first Adam; and Christ receives us, at his hand, as his gift.

The first thing that Christ does for us is to
cleanse

cleanse us from our filth, which the law has discovered to us: " From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

The second thing is to bring forth the best robe, and put it upon us. This is the wedding-garment: " The Lord (says Zion) hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Now the filthy garments of self-righteousness, discovered by the law, are put off, and this change of raiment is put on.

3dly. The ring of everlasting love is brought forth to adorn the hand. This ring of divine love subdues the carnal enmity discovered and stirred up by the law.

4thly. The next thing is, the shoes are brought forth for the feet; which shoes are peace with God through Christ, and peace with our own conscience through the application of the atonement: " Having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." These shoes much charm the heavenly wooer: " How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O princess daughter!"

The fifth thing is, the Sun of Righteousness now shines upon us with healing in his beams. He views us with approbation, complacency, and delight. This is the saving manifestation of himself to us, and to all that the Father hath given him.

him. This removes the old veil from the heart, which hung so heavy upon us under the law: the face being turned to the Lord, and we emboldened and encouraged to look up, the veil is taken away. All this work is done, in a greater or less degree, on the day of our espousals, and on the day of the gladness of the bridegroom's heart. And now let me shew thee the hand that faith, as an instrument, hath in all this.

First. Christ is the fountain open that cleanses from all sin, and faith applies the atonement: God purifies our hearts by faith.

2dly. The Lord Jesus "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" and faith lays hold of his righteousness, and puts it on. Hence it is said that "the righteousness of Christ is to all and upon all that believe."

3dly. Now, as faith has the honour of being the hand of the soul, which hand appropriates all these things to us; so faith, as the hand of the soul, is honoured with wearing this ring, which is the eternal love of God: "Faith worketh by love." And, as a wedding-ring is an emblem of love, and, when put on the proper finger, is a sure token from a husband to a woman of her wedlock with him; so the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit of God is a sure token of our espousals to Christ, and of eternal union with him, and of God the Father's love to us in him. And, as there is, at times, in an affectionate young woman

woman wooed, doubts and fears whether her intended will prove faithful at last or not, which will not be removed until she is espoused with a ring; so here the match will not appear clear to the soul; nor will doubts, fears, misgivings of heart, and torment, be cast out; till perfect love takes place, or until we are made perfect in love, or until this ring be put on the hand of faith; the greatest, the hardest, and most difficult work of faith being this, to persuade the soul that Christ loves it with an everlasting love; and even faith's persuasion must be attended with a feeling sense of this love too, or else the soul cannot rest satisfied. But, when this is done, the match is made, and is indissoluble, and the soul is more than sure of it. And now,

4thly, Faith puts on the shoes. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

5thly. Faith now looks through the veil, and sees him that is invisible; yea, she sees the promised seed, and embraces him. And it is this eye that captures the heart of the heavenly wooer: "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes." This, my beloved sister, is our espousals to the Lord Jesus; thus comes the second Eve to the second Adam. But still the Father doth not let his daughter go out of his hand; no,
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"None," saith the Bridegroom, "shall pluck them out of my hand;" and adds, "My Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Thus God holds her, and claims her as his daughter, and Christ holds her and claims her as his spouse, and as his Father's choice and gift to him. And, indeed, it was our heavenly Father that decreed, proposed, and made this match. Thus have I shewed thee how we become dead to the law that we may be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we may bring forth fruit unto God, even as the branch in the vine brings forth grapes.

But now observe what the Saviour says: "I am the vine, and ye are the branches, and my Father is the husbandman; every branch in me that beareth fruit my Father purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." After we have enjoyed the dearly beloved of our souls for a few months, our love, our simplicity, meekness, contrition, tenderness, filial fear, &c. abate in their exercise; and we begin to creep into self, wax proud, get secure and careless; dream of ease all the way, and are very nice, and rather dainty; nothing but the best wine of the kingdom, and the very marrow of the feast, will do for us; we must shew ourselves, seek admiration and applause, and appear to be something. But, when the Father sees this, he takes us in hand again; he visits our sins
with

with the rod, and our iniquities with scourges, as he says he will do; he turns us loose on the barren mountains of Sinai, he exercises us with legal bondage again. This stirs up every inbred corruption, which astonishes us; this convinces us of the need of diligence and watchfulness, and that we have not much to be proud of, seeing the root of every sin is still in us, though guilt is purged and sin is subdued by grace. And here our beloved withdraws himself, and is gone. He is not to be found at Horeb, but at Zion. From this mount we get nothing but barrenness, dryness, and deadness of soul. These things falling upon us, bring us to rue our pride, security, lightness, and folly; and, though we come no more under the curse, nor under vindictive wrath nor unpardoned guilt, yet it is a grievous yoke to an heaven-born soul, and not a little mortifying to one of the spouse's dignity. Bitter reflections, cruel jealousies, and humbling mortifications, attend this purging rod. And it is very debasing to appear with the yoke of a slave, and a fallen countenance, like a thief, before the more meek and lowly soul; as it is written "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women! My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices." He was gone down to them that were more meek and lowly. But when we are humbled the Father leads us back again to the enjoyment of Christ Jesus, who is God's salvation to the ends of the earth;

earth; and we are again influenced by a spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind; and now we are all tenderness, care, and circumspection, simplicity, meekness, and gratitude. But, alas! this soon wears off again, and then another purging comes upon the fruitful branch; and, after that is over, sweet union is felt again, and we feel our abiding in him; and do, by these means, bring forth fruit: and thus "we go in and out, and find pasture." This, my dear sister, is the purging hand that thou art now under. Thou art, for the third time, under the all-wise management of the great husbandman; and he is puzzling and confounding thy wisdom, and taking off some of thy luxurious branches, and casting down some of thy high-reasonings and contentions, which exalt themselves against the knowledge of him. And now for the spouse's request in the Song. Know thou that, when God shook the house where the apostles were assembled, together with the rushing of a mighty wind, and filled them all with the holy Comforter, under which influence they went forth and wrought, and the Lord worked by them, confirming their word with signs, that then was fulfilled this prophecy, "And the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go forth with whirlwinds of the south," Zech. ix. 14. Thus is the spirit of love called the south wind; wind being a known emblem of the Holy Ghost. Read Isaiah, chap. xl.

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Whereas the wrath of God in the law, which stirs up our enmity, is the spirit of bondage to fear; and, as it brings a cold chill on our love, and much fear and trembling, it is therefore called the north wind. Hence Solomon, knowing that bondage always precedes liberty, the one bringing grief and the other joy, says, "In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; for God hath set the one against the other." Prosperity is the time when our Lord embraces us; but our adversity is the time when the Lord refrains from embracing. Hence Solomon represents the spouse as being dissatisfied with her carnal ease, and dead, indifferent state; and that, to such a hungry soul, the bitterness of legal bondage would be sweeter than such a dead frame. He sets forth the spouse as praying thus: "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out;" knowing that there would be no divine embraces till humbling trials had taken place. In this way is the believer purged. Take notice further, that, as some souls are called servants, and are under the law, in bondage to it, and strangers to grace; so gracious souls, though often humbled, and exercised with the bondage of the law, are still under grace: the former being a corrupt tree in its natural state, and the other a good tree, purged, and made good by the grace of God. Solomon represents death as a woodcutter,

woodcutter, cutting both down, and both falling under their own proper influence; or as bending under that wind that blows upon them: "Whether the tree falls toward the north, or toward the south, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." No change shall be made in the soul after death. The former dies in self and self-righteousness, looking to the law; the latter dies in faith, looking to Jesus: and so shall each appear in the great day. Let my sister, therefore, kiss the chastening rod, and consider that she procures it to herself, and God appoints it for her good, and it is intended to make the spouse fruitful. But not so the servant, who is in a false profession; who, without being dead to the law, or divorced from it, yet claims Christ the second husband before the first be dead. These are otherwise dealt with; and so it follows: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away;" as he did Judas. And to such, and only such, in the most dreadful sense, is that awful text applicable, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" as every fruitless branch doth, which God the Father takes away from Christ, and from his church. These soon wither, and soon burn. If any thing in this scrawl is encouraging, comforting, or establishing, receive it as one espoused to the Lamb of God; for "all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ, or life, or death, or things

present, or things to come ; all are yours ;" and, among the rest, in the indissoluble bond of the everlasting covenant, I subscribe myself, in the Covenant Head, and for his sake,

Devotedly yours,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XXIX.

To NOCTUA AURITA, of the Desert.

I HAVE received safe your very valuable epistle, and I thank you kindly for the same. I was somewhat surprised at your writing a letter to me on that subject at that time. I will give you a little account how it has been with me since I wrote to you last.

The day after I wrote you the letter, which you know informed you that I was lying at anchor, wind bound, an unexpected breeze sprung up. I did expect the south wind, but, alas ! it was the
north

north wind ; and I have been for a fortnight tossed with no small tempest ; inasmuch that, at times, I have despaired even of life, and my mouth hath uttered perverse things before God. Such rebellion have I found working within, such contending with the Almighty, such unbelief prevailing, together with such deadness and barrenness, and such bitterness of spirit, that I think I never felt before. I am kept at such a distance from God, shut quite up in prayer, and not a word to plead before him, which made me cry out, " All these things are against me." I could get nothing under the word ; and therefore I have come away from the house of God raging like a rebel ; and have found true what you mentioned in your ' Child of Liberty in legal Bondage,' that, was it not for the strong hand of God on such souls, the ways of Zion would be unoccupied by them. I am sure this is true ; for my feelings at that time were quite the reverse of David's when he said, " How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord. When shall I come and appear before God ?" But not this, but the former, was the state of my mind when I received your letter ; and, when I read what you wrote on the subject of prayer, it caused desperation, in some measure, to work within me. Well, thought I, if this is the way that these enemies are to be overcome, what is to become of me ? Pray I

cannot; therefore, for ought I see, I must have their company. I had said, when I lay wind-bound, that I had rather be in the storm than lie so. And a storm it has been to me, with a witness. Having thus given you the dark side, I will proceed to inform you how the tempest was made to cease.

On Monday evening last I went to Bethel in all this storm. His excellency's oration was, "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer." This set me a quarrelling with him. Well, thought I, there will be nothing for me this night; I shall go home worse than I came out, as I did last night. I think, had he picked the sacred records throughout, he could not have found a subject that is more contrary to my present feelings. But no sooner did he begin to open than the contents distilled as the dew. The devil fled, unbelief got a blow, carnal reason was so put to the blush as to be forced to retire; nor have they dared to shew their rebellious heads since.

On Tuesday morning, on taking up the records of Zion, my eyes were directed to the following proverb: "The ear that heareth the reproof of life shall abide among the wise." I cannot express what a sweet light accompanied these words, which gave me to see what I had received the evening before. My mind was carried above the literal sense of the words. I understood

derstood what the ear there spoken of is, even the ear of the soul; the same that Christ himself spake of when he said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." This ear was given me; and what the Lord caused me to hear was, the reproof of life; because it was attended with a quickening influence to my soul. And that it was the voice of God, by his word and his Spirit, I have not a single doubt; because, on those three evenings, the devil, unbelief, and carnal reason, were forced to make their retreat, whose plea before was so powerful in my heart. And this visit was attended with a sweet persuasion, yea, an assurance, that I shall be found at last among the wise virgins, when the Lord comes with the midnight cry.

I think my sensations are at present somewhat like David's, when he said, "By this I know that thou favourest me, because my enemies do not triumph over me." I believe the Lord will never let me go out of his hands until he hath made me meet for the inheritance. He will put me into a thousand fires, that my dross and tin may be purged from me.

I have no larger paper, or I should have wrote you more at this time on some parts of your letter. I was sorry to hear, by a letter you wrote to my brother, that you was indisposed. I hope ere now you are about again, which I shall be very glad to hear as soon as convenient. Mr.

H—— joins me in kind love, and thanks you
for your letter. Believe me to remain

Your very affectionate friend

and sister in the Lord Jesus,

The King's Dale,

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XXX.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

THINE epistle comforted my heart.
My hope of you is stedfast. Nothing ever raised
a doubt in my mind of the goodness of thy state
but thy long abode on mount Tabor ; for, when
once meekness, contrition, godly sorrow, com-
punction of heart, self-abasement, and humility,
wear off, and dryness and lightness attend our
joy, there is danger. Pride and self-seeking creep
in ; nor is watchfulness and diligence in prayer
attended to. The vessel goes on, but wants bal-
last ; and, when the rod comes on, we fall many
leagues

leagues back. But now, blessed be God, we keep pace; we are in one and the same way. "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." If we share in the afflictions, so shall we in the consolations. I have had some uncommon seasons of refreshing of late; I mean, secret refreshings on my own spirit. His soul humbling advances towards me dissolved me, and sensibly affected both my body and soul. My hair moved upon my head, and I could feel my blood run in my veins. His presence, his unparalleled condescension, the freedom and the familiarity that he used with me, made my soul soar aloft in the most profound gratitude. I was obliged to stand still, and weep it out, for my mind floated on the river of self-abasing and unspeakable pleasure. The world and all about me seemed reduced to the drop of a bucket, or the small dust of a balance; my eyes poured out before him the tears of undissembled love, and I kept waving my hand, and coyly putting away the effects of his undeserved visit, crying out, "I am not worthy, I am not worthy, I am not worthy, I am not worthy." But, like himself, for he is like no other, he pressed his good-will, and the tokens of his eternal love, upon me, without taking the least notice of my repeated cries of unworthiness. My soul's unwearied enemy, who seldom leaves me one whole day together, fled, and not a corruption moved, nor a wandering thought sprung up, to lead my
mind

mind astray. I had three of these unexpected visits; but they were transient, like those of a way-faring man, who turns aside and tarries but a night. But I knew that they were earnest of more enduring and uninterrupted felicity. Soon after this my implacable enemy returned with double force; not to dispute me out of the reality of what I enjoyed, for I have felt more of that than ever he did, and know the sweetness of it better than he does; nor did he attempt to call in question my interest. He has dropt that for upwards of twenty years; nay, he has acknowledged it, and confessed it, when he hath wanted to tempt me to presumption. But, as all the doubts that his lies have raised in my mind could never move me from the foundation, so all his acknowledgments of the goodness of my state never added to my establishment. He can neither bless us at all, nor curse us at all. The work that he came to do was to stir up hard thoughts, prejudices, and enmity, at the best of friends, because I was then deserted, and my mind suffered to be defiled with a foul-mouthed devil, a rebellious and most blasphemous Jacobin. This word flew into my mind, "But I gave myself unto prayer." I took the hint; and, for three or four days, shut myself up, for the space of four or five hours in a day, to attend upon that very thing. And never to be sure did that holy and blessed Spirit, that all-prevailing intercessor, that quintessence

essence of all meekness, simplicity, and purity, help my infirmities more. I was amazed at the fortitude, boldness, freedom, fervour, argument, and powerful pleadings, that he equipped and furnished me with. Well might the Ancient of Days say to his apostles, " I will send you a Comforter, which the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." For years have I watched and attended to the secret and wonderful operations and influences of that benign and unchangeable friend of sinners, and have admired his quick, seasonable, and invariable counsel, cautions, and instructions, and have often called him by all the sweet names of heavenly Dove, sweet One, blessed Comforter, sure and faithful Witness, yea, and every sweet and pathetic name that my heart could indite, or my lips utter ; and, while I have been heaping them upon his blessed head, he has kept my mind tranquil, and his pleasing operations have wonderfully proclaimed his approbation of my simple encomiums. Soon after this I fell ill, and have been laid by a fortnight, during which time he left me not, but favoured me more than usual ; and one night I had the following dream. I dreamed that I was sitting at table with many of my friends. I do not remember any entertainment on the table. My mind was chiefly taken up at looking at my friends ; and, among
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the rest, there sat the Lord Jesus Christ in person ; and I knew him immediately ; nor did he vanish out of my sight ; and I found my mind inclined to put two questions to him. I said to him, Lord, there are but few in this world that know thee, and there is bread enough in our Father's house, and to spare ; and, as there are but few that know thee, and as thou hast but a few to feed, how is it then, that thou givest us so little ? He smiled, but gave me no answer. But I thought that every one at the table were looking at him, waiting for his reply ; which convinced me that my open question was the language of all their hearts. As I could not succeed in this question, I put another, and the eyes of all at the table seemed to look at me. I said, When you begin your work on us, you spare no pains, nor let our souls find rest, until you have weaned us from every thing under heaven ; nor will you appear satisfied till you have brought us to love you with all our heart, and with all our soul ; and, when you have gained this, what can be the reason of your leaving us, provoking us, and trying us, in so dreadful a manner ? The eyes of all the company, as soon as I had done with my question, were turned from me, and looked at him. But all that I got was another pleasing smile ; for my beloved gave me no answer. I cannot, at this time, describe to my dear sister how dead my soul is to this world, nor how dead this world is to me. Never did

did I see so clearly as now the meaning of the former and latter rain, mentioned Hosea vi. 3, James v. 7. The former shower, at conversion, I understand, when the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, took place; when righteousness, joy, peace, and praise, sprung up. This purged from guilt and filth, and a wonderful crop of the fruits of the Spirit succeeded. But the latter rain, at death, which is to root up and purge off the very inbeing of sin, must be a most stupendous work! The work of regeneration, and that of changing our vile bodies, and fashioning them like unto the glorious body of Christ, cannot be greater than this. But this is the thing that he hath spoken to us of; and then there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts. And I must tell thee that, at times, it is much on my mind, according to what I do now and then feel, that the latter rain is not far from me. "O then shall the fruit of the earth be excellent and comely, when he that laid the foundation of the earth shall plant the heavens!" Isa. li. 16. "Then shall there be no more treading down, trouble, nor perplexity, in the valley of vision." Isa. xxii. 5. In this confidence I subscribe myself

Yours to serve in the kingdom
and patience of Christ,

In the Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I CANNOT express how much I feel myself indebted to you for your soul-strengthening and soul-establishing epistle; for such it is indeed to me; though one part of it caused me sorrow of heart; and it will cause the same sorrow to thousands after the Lord takes you from us. But you have borne the burden and heat of the day, and the Lord has appointed the period when you are to rest from your labours. But, O how few labourers there are in the vineyard, though the harvest is truly great! It rejoiced my heart to hear of those sweet visits the Lord has favoured you with. I know something of them, though but in a small measure. I have been favoured with but few of them of late. I seem to be called to sharp conflicts. It gave me great satisfaction to find you acknowledge I am led in the same path with yourself; by which I think you mean the path of tribulation. Indeed, my dear brother, I am led to see more and more that it is the only way to the kingdom. My present standing greatly differs from what it was some time back.

back. I am not led in the expectation of much sensible enjoyment while in this wilderness; though I know that it is only the comfortable presence of the dear Redeemer which makes an heaven upon earth. But the inheritance is not to be enjoyed here, but only the earnest. I think you will not misunderstand me (but I know I am very blundering at conveying my ideas) in thinking I speak too slightly of those visits. But I am sure I was long seeking them as the only food I was to live on. But I see now that the just are to live by faith; and a daily cross is appointed for me. And I think that the Lord shewed me this some time before I was brought to submit to put my shoulders under the burden. But now I am convinced there is no growing in the divine life without trials. Never did I see, as I do now, the meaning of those words of Hezekiah, when he said, "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt thou revive me, and cause me to live." I can see now that the sharpest trials I have been exercised with have proved the greatest blessing to my soul. I thought, when I was on the mount Tabor so many months, I was surely in a place of safety. But, oh! I am well convinced it was a slippery place. Indeed I have not a wish to be placed there again. And, when I have perused the letters you sent me at that time, I am astonished they did not bring me down. But God had appointed the instrument that was
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to effect that. I may well say that it is owing to my having obtained help of God that I continue to this moment. I believe I shall never be finally left; he will put me in a thousand fires before he will suffer me to get from under his hand. I must tell you, that the subject of one part of your letter was entirely new to me, which is the latter rain at death. I thank you kindly for it. I believe the hand of God is in it, as it hath taken, in a great measure, a burden off my mind, which has been a matter of great perplexity, and which I never did communicate to any one; and that is with respect to the temporal death of the body. You cannot conceive the distressing fears I have lived in on account of this thing; how I should be in the pains of death; and fearing the assaults of Satan; and lest I should be, at that time, bereft of my senses, and so be left to dishonour God by speaking unadvisedly with my lips. And this has distressed my mind much. But those fears have not in the least abated since the sting of death has been taken away. Satan has, at times, been permitted to suggest to me, in times of desertion, that, if the work was genuine, those fears would not exist in my mind. But I cannot express what a sensible relief I felt when I read that part of your letter. I hope it will not return again. I know it is very dishonouring to God. If you should find your mind at liberty to enlarge on the subject, I shall take it as a favour; for the subject is much

much on my mind. I hope the Lord is confirming your bodily health, that you may not be confined from your labours. Mr. H—— much wishes he could write to you, but says he is so dead and stupid it is out of his power; but thanks you for your letters, and shall be always glad to hear from you, begging an interest in your prayers. I remain

Your very affectionate friend

and sister in the Lord Jesus,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER XXXII.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

BELoved sister in the Lord Jesus, and fellow-traveller in the path of tribulation, grace and peace be multiplied. Your kind epistle came safe to hand; and I thank you for your love in the Lord, and the respect you have shewn to me as a poor servant of his. Am at present better in

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bodily

bodily health than I have been for some time past. Every visit from him, every refreshing from his presence, and every time the old tabernacle totters, I am looking out for the greatest work that was ever done on the soul of a sinner. And would you know what it is? take it then. The promise of this great work runs thus: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea vi. 1—3. Here is Christ, and we in him; "Come, let us return unto the Lord." This is in the Covenant Head; for he it is that engaged his heart to approach unto God, to appear in his presence for us, Jer. xxx. 21.

"He hath torn, and he will heal us." This is the chastisement of Christ, which procured our peace, and by whose stripes we are healed.

"He hath smitten, and he will bind us up," &c. For our transgressions was he smitten; and to bind up the broken-hearted is the blessed cause of this smiting.

"After two days will he revive us."—"Christ died,

died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living," Rom. xiv. 9.

" In the third day he will raise us up."—" With my dead body shall they arise."—" Christ died, according to the scriptures, and was buried; and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures," 1 Cor. xv. 4. I know of no scripture which predicts his resurrection on the third day but this, and Jonah's resurrection from the fish's belly.

" And we shall live in his sight."—" He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us fit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 6.

" Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."—" He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him," John xiv. 21.

" His going forth is prepared as the morning." He is the bright and morning star which first dawns upon us; the day-spring from on high that visits us; and the sun of righteousness which warms us, and conveys healing to us.

" And he shall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain upon the earth." At conversion he comes down (by his Spirit) as showers upon the mown grass, and as rain that waters the earth. This is saving us by the washing

of regeneration, and renewing us by the Holy Ghost. And a wondrous work this is, when all the guilt and filth which we have contracted is done away, and not so much as a spot or stain appears; and at which time such a glorious crop, called the first fruits of the Spirit (I mean faith, hope, love, joy, peace, praise, life, and righteousness), spring up together, and send forth their sweet fragrance. When the beloved comes into his garden, and eats his pleasant fruits, this work is a most glorious work. But, as sure as the glory of the latter temple exceeded the glory of the former, so sure shall the latter rain produce a more glorious crop than the former; for what wretched roots, that bear hemlock, gall, and wormwood, still remain in the new-born soul! and what access the old fountain of all evil, subtilty, and mischief, hath to his old allies in every believing heart! Who but one could ever say, "When the prince of this world cometh, he hath nothing in me?" Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Canaanites and hornets are both in God's husbandry, though we are sojourners and dwellers with him. But the righteous have bands in their death; and these are the last fetters that shall ever gall a prisoner of hope; for love is strong as death. And, when charity, which never fails, shall do her last good office in this world, the latter rain comes down, and with its irresistible

power beats down and beats out every root and fibre of the old man, and purges out for ever every scarlet and crimson stain of sin, and leaves not so much behind as even the memory of it, then shall faith rise in sight, hope in full enjoyment, and love in her sevenfold heat. And then, but never till then, shall be brought to pass this saying, "And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts." Zech. xiv. 21. To attain to this, we have apprehended Christ, or rather are apprehended of him. This is that which concerns us, and God will perfect it; for he will not leave us until he hath done the thing that he hath spoken to us of: "To your old age I am he; I will bear, I will carry, and will deliver you." But we must be patient for this coming of the Lord. The husbandman waits till he receives the early and latter rain. Thus far, my dear sister, I have enlarged on this subject according to your request.

The daily cross is intended to counteract the devices of Satan, the workings of the old man, and the pleasing desires of the flesh. But, for my part, this is not all that I expect in the course of my pilgrimage. No; I expect some familiar visits, fresh love-tokens, and confirming renewals, and promised revivals, of the good work, even to the end of my race; for so it is written; "He shall confirm you unto the end." 1 Cor. i. 8.

There is a fault, which originates in our igno-

rance, and is common to all young believers ; and that is, limiting the Holy One of Israel, or confining or restraining the Holy Spirit of God to one operation, and that is, his influence of love in cherishing and comforting the soul. While these consolations last the poor believer thinks all is right, and that the Spirit, as the promised comforter, is upon him, and that he is born again, that his interest is clear, and his state is good ; but, when these subside, all is suspected and called into question, and the worst conclusions are often drawn ; and some, as far as they could, have cast away their confidence, and given all up for lost. And in this way Israel of old, and we as well as they, have often dishonoured, yea, rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit, Isa. lxiii. 10. Now let my dear sister observe and consider the following remarks. We are told that " prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i. 21. This speaking as they were moved doth not signify that they spake what they saw, for they spake many things which they never saw : " Many prophets have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them." Matt. xiii. 16, 17. Speaking as they were moved means, that they spake under the impulse and impression which they felt : " The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," Gen. i. 2 ; and " the Spirit of God moved Samson in the camp

camp of Dan," Judges xiii: 25. And we know that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; that, as there were diversities of motions by the Spirit upon the prophets under the Old Testament, so there are diversities of operations upon the souls of believers under the New; not only diversities of gifts by the Spirit, but of influences. So it follows, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii. 6. The prophet Jeremiah was to take the wine cup of God's fury at God's hand, and to cause all nations to drink it. The Spirit moved him with the just indignation of God. His was truly the burden of the word of the Lord; for most of his prophecies contained heavy judgments. Under this motion of the Spirit the imprecations on the wicked, which so often occur in the Psalms, were penned.

Elijah was moved with the jealousy of God against idolatry, and with power to oppose it, and with a flaming zeal for God's honour. Hence we read so much of the spirit and power of Elias, and of his zeal for the Lord God of Hosts.

Sometimes the Spirit moved them with the influences of divine wrath. Under this motion the prophet Elisha cursed the forty and two children which were devoured by bears; and under the

same influence Gehazi went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

Sometimes they were moved with the pity and compassion of the Lord. Under these motions the kind invitations, encouragements, and those pathetic commiserations, so often to be met with in the Psalms, were written.

Sometimes they were moved with the eternal love of God, a sense of his presence, and comfortable communion and fellowship with him. And under this influence Solomon wrote his love song upon Christ and his church.

Influenced with the bowels of God's mercy, the prophet Isaiah set forth and painted the dolorous sufferings of Christ. Moved with the faithfulness and immutability, the prophets have advanced and enforced the firmness of God's decrees, the stability of his covenant, and the certainty of the eternal salvation of all the elect of God. Thus it appears plain that there were diversities of motions by the Spirit of God upon the prophets; and there are also diversities of operations upon all believers. Every grace is of the Holy Spirit's planting; and he is the life of every grace; and the exercise of every grace depends upon his operation. If this wind blows not, the spices flow not out. Sometimes the Spirit operates wonderfully in strengthening and supporting the believer, by his might in the inward man. "My heart and my flesh fail, but God is the strength
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of my heart, and my portion for ever.”—“ In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.” Psa'm cxxxviii. 3. To this agrees the prophet : “ But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” Micah iii. 8. Again : one of his operations produceth sorrow, which rises from a sense of sin, being grieved at it, and hating ourselves for the commission of it, and mourning after God, and after forgiveness and reconciliation with him ; which sorrow is drawn forth by discoveries of his goodness, and stirred up by the Holy Spirit, who testifies of Christ to us, and who produceth this godly sorrow, which terminates in repentance. Under this operation Hannah endured her affliction of barrenness and persecution ; and under the same she went to Shiloh.

Another of his operations is often felt in prayer : when he quickens us to feel our need ; shews us the things that are freely given us of God ; furnishes our mouths with arguments, and our souls with energy, till nothing in heaven or earth can stand before us. This is helping our infirmities, and making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

As a spirit of faith, he will at times equip the soul with such confidence, that even things impossible to nature are performed without a doubt.

an if, or a but. Under this operation Sarah received strength to conceive ; and under the same David met the Goliath of Gath.

Almighty faith the promise sees,
And trusts in Christ alone ;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And says it shall be done.

Again ; when a child of God is called to endure a great fight of affliction, in order that he may endure them, and not be moved by them, he is wonderfully influenced with meekness and patience. Hence we read so much of the meekness of Moses, and of the patience of Job.

In defending and protecting the believer against the cunning craftiness of those heretics which circulate damnable heresies, the Spirit's power is not a little seen in setting truth before their eyes, and in applying it with power to the heart, so as to render it impossible for the most subtle seducer to seduce a chosen vessel. Thus he guides us into all truth, and is called " the spirit of a sound mind."

Nor are his influences less upon an awakened sinner, whom, as a spirit of life, he quickens to feel every sin brought to his mind and memory, and the guilt of them ; yea, he makes his sensations so keen, that the wrath, the frowns, rebukes, and reproofs, of God are all felt and feared ; yea, every word of truth that militates against him is felt,

felt, and the poor sinner trembles at it ; and wonderfully is such a poor creature supported under the weight of guilt and wrath that lies on him, and the sore buffetings and accusations of Satan, though it is imperceptible to him. But sure I am that no soul, without almighty power and momentary support, can stand upon this ground ; black despair, or wild destruction, must ensue. But as our day is so shall our strength be.

The same Spirit that convinces us of our sin supports us under our convictions.

Another of his operations is that of a comforter ; which comfort is produced by believing views of Christ, and of our interest in him ; by shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts ; by helping our infirmities in prayer ; by applying the blood and righteousness of Christ to us ; by witnessing our adoption ; and by applying promise upon promise to our souls, while we suck those choice breasts of consolation, milk out and are delighted with the abundance of Zion's glory, and by giving us the first fruits, powers, earnest, pledges, and foretastes, of the world to come ; which are streams from the river of divine pleasure flowing from the fountain of life, and are intended to make glad the city of God, the sacred places of the tabernacles of the Most High.

As a spirit of revelation he leads us into the mysteries of the kingdom, and into the secret counsels and purposes of God, into his decrees
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and covenants, and gives us bright views of the ancient settlements of eternity, and of the glorious and rich displays of grace; and leads us to see a blessed harmony in the doctrines of the gospel, and produces harmony in our mind and judgment; and a most sweet peace and tranquillity of soul follow upon these things. An earnest desire to establish thee is the cause of my leading thy mind through the above operations.

As to myself, my heart has long sunk and rose with my country. I view Old England as the seat of the church of the living God, and the valley of vision, Isa. xxii. 1. And, because of the house of the Lord my God, I will seek my country's good. Every time that I hear of any success attending the French I find uncommon energy in prayer against them; and every time they are defeated my soul pours forth her gratitude to my God. In all the circle of my acquaintance, whether in town or country, I do not know one child of God, who really knows his own heart, and the great Physician, but what has an earnest desire, a prayer, and a cry, in his heart to God against that base nation. And who furnishes us with these desires and prayers? That God that will fulfil our desires, and grant the request of our lips; for sure I am that the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God, but never contrary to it. I believe I have some knowledge of about thirty persons who, in their simplicity,
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have inadvertently sucked in the venom of Tom Paine; and nothing but barrenness, confusion, guilt, and bondage, followed them. But, as soon as God led me to shew his mind and will concerning it, they fell before it; and, by the furnace of affliction and humbling grace, they brought it up, and returned to their rest. But some few that I know have drunk deep into it; and these, like the house of Eli, will not be easily purged, either by sacrifice or offering. They are too wise to be instructed, and too strong to be brought down to submit to the word of truth. No private prayer, nor public warning, hath any effect upon them. And this hath made them manifest to me, and to many more. And I believe in my heart that their wisdom will terminate in their own destruction; because "they have not hearkened to my counsel," 2 Chron. xxv. 16. God will destroy the fat and the strong; he will feed them with judgment, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. And I know of no professors so strong, in the worst sense, as those which faithful reproof cannot pull down. But my God will never look to, nor dwell with, any but those who are of an humble and a contrite spirit, and who tremble at his word. An awful proof of this hath lately been discovered. A man who resided not far from the chapel, and who had attended me for some time diligently, and appeared to be a reformed man, and began to call upon God, and kept up prayer in his family, and, as Paul says of the Galatians, seemed to run well, but Satan hindered him,

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by conveying the sentiments of Tom Paine to his mind ; at which time he became a sworn enemy to government, and of course associated with those who could strengthen his hands in rebellion. Nevertheless he did not leave the chapel, nor drop prayer in his family. And, though I was often led to bear my testimony against that infernal spirit, yet he stood his ground ; he obeyed not the voice of his teacher, nor was he to be fed with that part of God's wholesome word which tells every soul to be subject to the higher powers. But it was not long before God fed him with judgment ; for when I preached the " Watch-word and Warning " he was there ; and God sent it home to his heart, and down he went ; and when he got home he told his wife that he was a damned man, and that he was in the state that I had described ; and from that time he left off praying. Soon after this he got up to Kensington palace ; and there he cursed and blasted the king, and told the people that he was king. Some of the military, hearing of this, took him into custody ; but, perceiving him out of his mind, they dismissed him. Thus he began with that doctrine that holds up the majesty of the people ; and, when given up to the devil, he proclaimed himself a king. But, if we are obedient unto death, we shall be more ; for " he hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever. " Adieu.

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I HAVE received your epistle, for which I feel more thanks in my heart than I have words to express. I believe I shall ever remain the greatest debtor you have; and I am sure I shall never be able to pay one mite towards it. But I know the Lord will return you fourfold; because he has said, "Whatsoever ye have done unto one of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me." You have never yet denied me any one request I have made; the consideration of which emboldens me to come to you again with some difficulty which I have upon my mind. I told you, in my last, that what you mentioned in your former letter of the latter rain which was to come down on the believer at death, had, in some measure, released my mind from some fears which I have been long harassed with. I thank you for enlarging on the subject. Indeed, the matter lay with much weight on my mind. You mention this passage, viz. that "the righteous have bands in their death;" and that these shall be the last fetters that shall be broken. I am in the dark
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what these bands are; but it seems they are to snap at a dying hour. But yet you call the work that is to be done on the soul at that time the greatest work of all. Is it not strange, then, that my mind should be again brought into bondage under the fear of death? You told me, in a former letter, that we were travelling in the same path; but, indeed, I think it is otherwise now. But you must judge when I give you an account of my present feelings. And one thing in your letter confirms me in it, viz. where you say that the daily cross, which is intended to counteract the devices of Satan, the workings of the old man, and the pleasing desires of the flesh, is not all you expect in the course of your pilgrimage; but that you expect some familiar visits, fresh love-tokens, confirming renewals, and promised revivals, of the good work of God, even unto the end. This is the place I seem to turn out of your path; and, indeed, I have at present no such things in expectation. And it seems to me that I am confirmed in this by the word of God. The passage I refer to is recorded in Ezekiel: "But, when the people of the land shall come before the Lord in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth in by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate; he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against

against it." Ezek. xlii. 9. The latter part of this verse seems to comprehend my *past experience*, my *present feelings*, and my *future path*, and has involved my mind in much darkness and gloominess; and I am led to believe that I am more interested in the mystical sense of this passage than any one upon earth. And it is this text that has cut off all my expectations of future enlargement while in this world; which is also confirmed to me by what Mr. Hart says in one of his hymns:

Their pardon some receive at first,
And then, compell'd to fight,
They find their latter stages worst,
And travel much by night.

The above passage in Ezekiel has been on my mind for this twelvemonth past, and I have thought that there has been a great depth in the words; but they never brought any difficulty on my mind till about a month ago, when it forcibly struck me that I was so much concerned in them; and I have also many things to confirm me in it. You have told me, and so have others, that the Lord has dealt with me in a singular manner, both with respect to the degree and duration of those spiritual joys and consolations which I have been favoured with in times past. And what inference can be drawn from it but that which is meant by coming in by the south gate, and that I

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am no more to return by the way of the gate whereby I came in, but I am to go forth by the way of the north gate? And I believe the north and south gate mean the same operations as the north and south wind. Will you grant me this request also, that is, to give me your thoughts on the passage. I do assure you it is not a matter of curiosity. I do believe you will sympathize with me, and feel for me, and pray for me. This seems to be the sharpest trial I have lately had; though, blessed be the Lord, I feel no shakings nor unsealings respecting my state. But I have at present no light on my path; and, to my dark understanding, that text has made a discord in the word of God, and seems to clash with such passages as this, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" and this also, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, walk and not faint." But, instead of this, my expectations are of more darkness, sharper trials, being perpetually under the hiding of God's face; and, indeed, I am already in the dark path. God says, in his word, that he will abundantly bless the provisions of his house, and that he will satisfy his poor with bread; that his priests shall be clothed with salvation, and his saints shall shout aloud for joy. But, instead of this, I have lately been very barren under the
word.

word. I have seen the provision blessed to others, but nothing under the priest's hands for me. He has been clothed with salvation, and the food has been so blessed to others, that I have seen them shout aloud for joy, while I have hung down my head like a bulrush. God says, that those who are planted in his house shall flourish in his courts; that they shall be fat and flourishing: instead of this, I am crying out, "My leanness, my leanness! wo unto me!" though there is no famine of the word, but bread enough and to spare. But I know I have procured all this to myself by my pride, and by that folly that is bound up in my heart; and there it is like to remain, unless the rod of correction drives it out. I think the prophet Isaiah speaks also of this darkness that I feel, where he says, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light?" and then he enjoins the hardest work of all, when he says, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God," because he mentions *his* God. I infer, therefore, that he means the darkness that I am in; because, through all, I have not been led to cast away my confidence; because I think that this trial comes from God himself, for I cannot see that Satan has any hand in it; so it must be God, I think, that laid that passage with such a weight on my mind. But perhaps, when you read this, you will see for me,

as you have done oft times before. You tell me you have an earnest desire to establish me; and this last epistle is not less precious to me than the former; and indeed I do feel my love to you in the Lord increasing in whatever frame I am; and I firmly believe you are to be the instrument of confirming the work that God has done upon my soul by the ministry of my dear father in Christ. I have some things on my mind that, were it expedient, I would communicate to you; but there is at present a lion in the way. I have had many pros and cons on my mind since I received your last whether I should write to you or not. But I believe you are to know all my heart. May the Lord give you something for me that shall bring my mind forth from out of these dark regions; for I seem held fast where I am, and that with a strong hand. I know there hath been many things which you have predicted to me that I could not believe till they came to pass. But true it is that not one word that you have spoken to me has fell to the ground; nor have I found you a false prophet in any of your predictions. I was glad to hear you was better in bodily health. We shall be glad to see you in our parts again; and believe me to remain, as much as ever,

Your affectionate friend, but
unworthy sister in the Lord,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

To *PHILOMELA*, in the *King's Dale*.

YOUR last is now before me ; and I have just as much right to thank you for it, as you have to thank me for mine ; for, if any thing from me may cast a ray of light on thy mind, or on thy path, I am often rewarded in answering thine by some fresh thoughts, or new discoveries, which are often attended with devotional sensations, which melt my soul down, and draw out my gratitude to the best of all friends.

“ The wicked have no bands in their death, their strength is firm.” But remember, it is *their* strength. Satan, who blinds their eyes, and keeps their conscience asleep, is the strong man armed, that fortifies their carnal mind, and supports their false confidence and vain hope, even when launching forth into the bottomless pit. These, our Lord tells us, “ lift up their eyes in hell,” and never before. But we, my dear sister, are planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, as well as in the likeness of his resurrection, and must indeed drink of the cup that he drank of. And it is well known that he had bands in his death ; for

Christ was a bond-servant under the law, as appears by the thirty pieces of silver which he was sold for; which was the price to be paid (according to the law) to the owner of a bond-servant which had been gored to death by the horns of a beast. Read and compare Exod. xxi. chap. with Psalm xxii. and Zech. xi. 12. The Saviour's worst bands were our sins, his Father's wrath, and the powers of darkness. When the prince of this world came to him to bruise his heel, these deep waters entered his soul, Psalm lxix. 1; besides the insults of the Jews, and the excruciating pains of his body. But all these pains of death were loosed, because "it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Acts ii. 24. Our worst bands are the corruptions of our heart, the law in our members, and inbred sin that works in us, and will work in us as long as we live. These often make us halt, faint, and stumble, and often betray us into a spirit of legal bondage, and procure us many chastisements, many spiritual desertions, and much fatherly anger. And these sensible suspensions of divine favour, frowns, stripes, and bondage, when sanctified, are intended to purge the branch, that it may bring forth more fruit. Not a few of these purging draughts have fallen to thy share already in the short course of thy pilgrimage; and when humbling grace operates, how are our sinful stirrings subdued, how are they detested, and for a while out of sight, when sweet

love, meekness, contrition, godly sorrow, self-
 abhorrence, unfeigned faith and abounding hope,
 much peace and divine tranquillity, all appear up-
 permost in the soul, and make it look like a bride
 adorned with her jewels. This, my dear sister, is
 what I mean by bands in the saints' death. These
 corruptions will stick by us to the last, and Satan
 often works sadly in them and by them; and it is
 generally seen, though not always, that the child
 of God, on his death-bed, is not a little exercised
 with them; as it will be even with the wise vir-
 gins when the midnight cry comes. An alarm
 will go forth; then they will arise and examine
 themselves, and there will be a little purging work
 go on upon them; some sharp reproofs, some
 melting and humbling trials; and then a restoring
 of them to the joys of the Lord's salvation. Trim-
 ming of lamps consists in wiping them out, cut-
 ting off the burnt snuffs, pouring in fresh oil, and
 lighting them up, that the light of the righteous
 may rejoice when the lamp of the wicked is put
 out. But the creature, the new creature, the
 whole mystical body of Christ, shall be delivered
 from the bondage of corruption, and be brought
 into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; for
 this is the earnest expectation of every new crea-
 ture in Christ Jesus. For this creature was made
 subject to vanity, or death (Gen. iii. 19. Eccl. iii.
 19, 20); not willingly, for death is not desirable
 in itself; but God hath subjected us to it in hope,

that our souls may be delivered from all corruption at our departure out of this world ; that we may have hope of glory in death, and leave the body to rest behind us, in hope of a glorious resurrection, which will be the last work of hope in this world. Thus we must hope to the end, and no longer ; for what a man seeth himself in full possession of why doth he yet hope for ?

But because I told you, in my last, that “ I expected some familiar visits, love-tokens, confirming renewals, and promised revivals, in the course of my pilgrimage, even to the end, as well as a daily cross,” I have staggered you ; and, in the expectation of these things, you say you seem to turn out of my path. No, no, my sister ; I ran to the same extremes that you do. When in my first love I said, and believed it too, that I should never be moved from the mount, the Lord of his goodness had made my hill so strong ; but, when spiritual desertions came on, and Satan returned with double rage, and every inherent corruption was stirred up, attended with legal bondage and slavish fear, I then concluded, as Job did, “ my days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope ; O remember that my life is wind, mine eye shall no more see good !” Job vii. 6, 7. David was wrong in his exultation, for God hid his face from him. Job was wrong also in his lamentation, for the Lord appeared to him clearer than ever he did before. I was wrong
also,

also, for I have had hundreds of visits since I drew those sad conclusions; and you are wrong, for he will revive and renew his work on thy soul, and bring it to light, and confirm you in it again and again: " They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, and spread forth their roots like Lebanon." If they revive, there must be more life; if they grow, there must be more grace given; and, if they spread forth their roots, their love must be drawn forth, for we are to be rooted and grounded in love; and, if we are to root like Lebanon, we must be strengthened, established, and settled, this way. But you inform me that you have no such expectations, and that you are confirmed in your opinion by the word of the Lord itself. The passage you allude to in Ezek. xlv. 9, you do not rightly understand. That the temple spoken of in that chapter was a type of the church of God under the New Testament is plain, for the church bears the same name; and that all the furniture of the temple, in its gospel signification, is now found in gospel Zion, cannot be denied; and that there are such things as north and south winds, which blow on the Lord's garden, I hinted to you in a former epistle; and likewise I mentioned Solomon's trees, which he represents as falling toward the north and toward the south, and of their unalterable state after they are fallen; and no doubt but the north and south gates that you allude to have the same signification.

signification. Suppose a poor sinner is seized with a spirit of bondage to fear, and wrath and guilt work in him till his soul is chilled, and he filled with fear and trembling : this is the north wind, the spirit of bondage, which is the wrath of God. But at length he is enabled to fly from wrath to come, and to embrace the hope set before him ; and he exercises faith on the Saviour, and comes sensibly into his favour, into his grace, and into his finished salvation. He then passes from death to life, and shall never more come into condemnation. He enters by the north gate. Christ to him is the gate of life, and the end of the law for righteousness. His faith now works by love ; and, as loving-kindness is never to be taken from him, he shall go out at the south gate. But then, what is or can be meant by going out of the church ? Why, in one sense, the believer can never go out at all ; for “ he that overcometh is made a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more out.” Going out, therefore, can mean nothing but a being translated from the militant to the triumphant church by death. Moreover, suppose a person, at his first setting off in a profession, is allured and drawn into it by a sense of God’s goodness, and a believing view of his kind providence, as Hezekiah was, and as Job seems to be, and the north wind, or a spirit of bondage, falls upon him, as it did upon those two men, that they might see the hand-writing that was against them,

them, and that they might know the sin of their heart by the application of the law ; this alters not the state of their souls ; they were members of Christ before, so they were when in their troubles, and they were more sure of this when their deliverance came. It remains, therefore, that it cannot, in the worst sense, mean a real believer ; for, though he may be exercised in his pilgrimage, and on his death-bed, with legal bondage, yet he cannot go out of the church, and out of the world, under the wrath of God, nor yet in bondage ; his end must be peace, not wrath. The covenant, the oath of God, the promise of life, the death of Christ, and the Spirit's work, all forbid this. To conclude this subject, in the strictest and worst sense of the words, the comer-in at the south gate is the *way-side hearer*, who has his natural affections and passions stirred up ; in whom light, joy, gifts, and zeal, spring up ; and who, in time of temptation and persecution, falls away, and goes out of the church, and into the world, and then out of the world under the wrath and curse of God. And this character is further described by this prophet in the 16th verse of this same chapter ; and Christ, in his days, quotes the words, and applies them : " Thus saith the Lord God, If the prince give a gift to any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons ; it shall be their possession by inheritance," Ezek. xlii. 16, This inheritance is eternal life ; and Christ came that
that

that we might have it; and he that hath it, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; for Christ came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. " But, if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince." Ezek. xlv. 17. Our Saviour's explanation and application of this text is, " Take the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents; for he that hath not (hath not life, but a spiritual gift), it shall be taken away from him, even that which he hath." And it is often seen that a servant cuts a most glaring figure in the church of God, until the spirit of love and liberty be poured forth upon some of the elect of God about him; and, when he sees this, he sinks in his soul at the sight, and at the light, and hates it, as Saul did, when he saw that God was with David. Such an one sinks in the esteem of such heaven-born souls as much as Saul did in the eyes of Samuel, when he said, " Honour me now before the elders of my people." Nothing discovers a false profession, and a false professor, like the spirit of love and liberty being poured out upon poor broken-hearted sinners about him; and, if it come upon such as have looked up to him as something great, discriminating grace discovers him. At this he is offended, and hates the light, and flees from it, and fights against it; and this withers his joys, it
blasts

blasts his zeal and diligence, and dries up the glee of his animal spirits, and natural abilities too ; so that his gifts return to the prince, and he gives the talent to others. He that receives this gift is a servant, and he comes in at the south gate. He begins his profession with having his passions moved, and his natural affections stirred up, and comes in at the south gate ; and, when the jubilee comes, he either takes offence at it, or else, in persecution and temptation, falls away, and legal bondage seizes him, and he goes back to the first husband, the law, never being divorced from it : and this is going out at the north gate. And, when death cuts such a corrupt tree down, the tree falls toward the north ; and where the tree falls there it shall lie. But the name and title of the other is that of a son ; and his inheritance shall not be taken from him, nor shall he go out of the church but by death : he came in by the north gate. A spirit of bondage, sooner or later, more or less, doth exercise all the elect of God, till love casts their fears out : such come in by the north gate, and shall go out by the south. Death cuts that tree of righteousness down, and it falls toward the south ; and in the place where it falls there it shall lie.

I must confess that I rather wonder at your giving up all expectations of sensible visits from God by the way, only from your constructions put upon that dark and ambiguous text ; “ An
 enemy

enemy hath done this." God will never apply any passage of his word in a sense that shall run counter to the whole current of scripture. " I am with you alway to the world's end. I will water them every moment. I will keep them night and day. Their leaf shall be green ; nor shall they cease from yielding fruit." And sure I am that heaven and earth shall pass away before a jot or tittle of his word shall fail. And as sure as temptations, desertions, legal bondage, or unbelief, obscure the good work on thy heart, so sure will God shine upon it, revive it, and bring it forth to light again ; being confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, when it shall be perfected, both in body and soul. In this confidence, and in the best of bonds, I remain

Yours to serve for his sake,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XXXV.

To NOCTUA AURITA, of the Desert.

I HAVE received your letter, which came to me wet with the dew of heaven; and therefore I must call it Gideon's fleece, when it was taken out of the floor wet. I hope you will excuse my coming to you so soon; but really I could stay no longer. By your letter my mind is entirely delivered from that darkness which has entangled me for these three months past, respecting the coming in by the south gate, and going forth by the north, &c. I believe Satan never had before such a simple fool to deal with. I perceive he is the enemy that has done me all this mischief; but he is now discovered. I know it was he that applied that passage to my mind, and made me believe that it was left on record on purpose for me, and could be applicable to no one's case but mine. I can see now, as clear as I can see the sun at noon day, when he entered first, and the ends he had in view; and, by my relating to you the exercises I have passed under since I wrote you that letter, I think you will see it too. You know he had then gained his point so far as to cut off
all

all my expectations of being favoured with any more revivings, renewings, or sensible manifestations of the Lord's love and favour towards me while in this world; and he brought the word of God to prove it, which was, that I was to go out by the north gate: therefore there was nothing but gloominess and darkness felt by me. This caused my hands to hang down, and my knees to wax feeble, and nothing was expected by me but more darkness and misery; and this did come to pass, for I got deeper and deeper in distress and darkness. This confirmed me yet more that it was God himself that had laid that passage with such a weight on my mind. This strengthened my bands, and made them still tighter; and, after three or four weeks had passed, and I had received no answer from you to my letter, he came to me thus, and insinuated that I was not on your heart and in your affections as formerly; and that God had taken me off, and that he would not suffer you to send me a word more, nor even to pray for me; and then set before me what a curse that soul must be under that was not on the heart of the servants of the Lord, because he says that whatsoever they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; though I know I did never wholly credit this lie of his; but it was but one thing that kept me from it, and that was this, I thought God would not take me
off

off the heart of one of his servants without taking me off the heart of the other ; and with respect to that being the case with my dear pastor, the King's herald, Satan was not permitted to assault me with, for I had had proof enough of late that I was more on his heart than ever ; and I had not a doubt on my mind but he did pray for me.

O, blessed be the Lord that he can go no further than he is permitted ! Satan proceeded against me with great caution, lest he should be discovered. He was slow, but sure to deceive so far ; but he had not got to the length of his chain yet. About a fortnight ago he came to me in a vision of the night. I dreamed I was in a barn-floor, and had got a halter about my neck to hang myself, but was prevented. However, soon after I found the halter round my neck the second time, in a hitch knot, fastened to a beam above my head, and myself standing some considerable height from the ground ; and I was just stretching forth my hands to give myself a swing off the place, when I instantly awoke, in such horror, and in such darkness, as it is impossible for me to describe, and with a conviction on my mind that the dream was a prediction of the awful end I should make, and that this was what was meant by going out by the north gate. Every thing was hid from my sight that God had done for my soul ; the bed could not contain me long ; and in this situation and conflict I was four days and nights.

O

This

This surely must be what David meant when he said the pains of hell got hold of him ; for sure I am that my feelings were similar to what the damned in hell feel. Here I let go my hold of the Rock, and so I lay exposed to all the shafts of Satan ; and this was his hour, and the powers of darkness ; for there was nothing to resist him, for I had not one piece of that armour that God has provided in exercise ; and sure I am that, if my safety had depended on my hold of the Rock, I had sunk to rise no more. But the Rock held me, and followed me through this dark path. The third day I could write a few lines to his excellency, and he sent me a letter ; and God did give him a word for me which did in a measure abate the violence of the temptation. He told me it was Satan, and I was helped in a measure to believe it ; and I felt a calmness in my mind, and these words afforded some consolation to me, namely, the conversation between John and the angel in the Revelation, where he says, " Who are these, and whence came they ? " and the angel's reply, " These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; therefore are they before the throne of God." I saw much in this word *therefore* ; by it I clearer than ever saw that there was no getting to heaven but through a rough path ; and these words of James added something to the calm on my mind,

" Blessed

"Blessed is he that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life." And I know that I had been made to endure this conflict, and also who had supported me through it. But Satan was not fully discovered till I received your letter; and, when I had read it twice, I said with David, "Though an host encamp against me, I will not fear; though war rise up against me, in this will I be confident, for God is with me of a truth." And sure I am that all that Satan has told me about not being on your heart as aforetime, is a lie. And the Lord has been pleased to set his broad seal to the contents of your letter, that my mind might be, if possible, more than fully satisfied that it came from him, and that you gave me the mind of the Spirit; for, on reading the xlviith of Ezekiel after perusing your letter, and after reading the 10th verse, which says, "And the prince in the midst of them when they go in shall go in, and when they go forth shall go forth;" to think Satan should hold me in such darkness so long quite astonished me, when that one verse is quite sufficient to prove all the interpretations that he had put on the verse before to be nothing but lies. After I had communicated the dream and the conflict to his Majesty's herald, I had concluded never to rehearse it again; but the light that accompanied your letter to me made me alter my mind, for I thought you would see more of the

(196)

work of Satan and his craft than I could. May the Lord bless you with the blessings of the upper and nether springs, and abundantly reward all your labours of love to my soul! This is, and ever will be, the prayer (when privileged with access to God) of

Your very sincere and affectionate sister

in the bonds of the gospel,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

P. S. My partner unites with me in kind love. We should be very glad to see you at our cottage this summer; and the poor Shunamite will be very glad to accommodate you with a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

Yours came safe to hand; in which you intimate that the snare of the fowler is, in some measure, broken. Satan can quote and apply scripture when it will serve his own turn; but he is never divided against himself in that work.

As the angels were the first creatures that God made, and are called the morning stars, and sons of God, who sung their anthem together, and shouted for joy at the creation of the world, Job xxxviii. 7; so I have no doubt but they were present when God gave the law to Adam, as they were also at the giving it to Israel at Sinai, Heb. ii. 2. And this appears plain by Satan (after his fall from heaven) quoting the word of God in his first attempt to deceive Eve: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" He used the same art in his tempting Christ to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple: "It is written," saith Satan, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up." Matt. iv. 6.

In this way Satan labours to discourage every broken-hearted sinner whom the Lord hath awakened, quickened, and wounded ; I mean, by quoting and applying the most terrible texts of scripture to them, which he does to obstruct our way to Christ, to dishearten us, to sink us in despair, and to stop the mouth of prayer, and to stir up hard thoughts of Christ ; and some of the most alarming passages in the Bible are thrown as stumbling-blocks in our way, and we stumble upon the dark mountains of Sinai, and stumble at election, and at reprobation, Zech. vi. 1. Heb. xii. 18. In this way he harassed me, by bringing continually to my mind the unpardonable sin, or sin unto death ; and that of Esau's finding no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears ; the deplorable state of Saul, when God answered him no more ; that also of man giving an account at the day of judgment for every idle word ; and the soul that sins shall die : all these, and many more of the like import, were perpetually brought to my mind with forcible suggestions that I was the man ; and that God had sent me into the world, as he did Pharaoh, to shew his wrath and power in me. These, and many more, were brought hourly to me, and set before me as my sorrowful meat. And who applied them to me ? not God ; for, if he had, they must all have been fulfilled ; for whatever God says, whether against us or for us, shall most surely come to pass.

But

But none of these came to pass with me in the way that Satan predicted they would.

But, on the other hand, every promise that God sent to me stood fast. The first word that ever came to me from him was, "Believe that I am in you, and you in me;" and that moment everlasting light shone into my soul, to shew me where I was; and there it is to this day.

The next was, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." God did enable me to overcome in that dreadful temptation; and I believe to this day that God hath called me that I might receive the reward of eternal inheritance.

The next was, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And at that time righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, filled my heart.

Being once much concerned in my mind about the state of many poor quiet people who did not run to the same excess of riot as many do, I asked the Lord what would become of them, and he said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Being at another time brought into bondage by disputing with an old Arminian, and being sadly tossed in my mind between free will and free grace, and some passages of scripture which seem to favour both, the Lord spoke to me thus, "Do not the scriptures say that no man can come to me except the Father draw him?" I answered, I

know they say so. Then it came again, saying, "If you can find a place where it says that a man can come without being drawn, then you may prove the Bible lies;" and away went all my confusion and bondage, and sweet tranquillity followed. From that moment Arminianism kicked the beam, nor did it ever stagger me afterwards; and I am at a point that none but the devil is the author of that system.

When I carried coals, a person came into the neighbourhood, and took a room for an Oxford Blue to preach in. A voice told me that that room was opened for me. When the man came to speak his mouth was stopped, and I was invited to speak there, which I afterwards did for some years.

One Sunday morning, going out to hear a minister that was to preach out of doors, a voice came to me saying, "You must preach out of doors to-day;" and it told me what text I was to speak from also; and the minister that was expected disappointed the people, for he came not; so they constrained me to speak, which I did all that summer, and the summer following.

Being once in great distress and want, these words were spoken to my heart, "I know thy tribulation, and poverty; but thou art rich." And I believe, with my whole heart, that the Lord did take notice of my poverty and sufferings, by his kind appearance for me afterwards in providence;
and

and that the Lord is the portion of my soul I have no doubt, for he hath redeemed me; and “ the ransom of a man’s life is his riches.” Prov. xiii, 8, When he sent me to London he told me to “ prophesy upon the thick boughs.” And surely none could be more opposed than I have been, by almost every dissenting minister and congregation; besides the oppositions that I have met with from false-hearted friends, from worldlings, from devils, heretics, and hypocrites. And still the boughs are thick, and thick they will be as long as it pleases God to speak by me.

When I had that disturbance in the church, which you know of, God told me, by his Spirit, that he would avenge his own elect. And no small number have got that vengeance lodged in their conscience to this day; besides the many that went out of the world in less than two years after God had discovered the bane of their hearts.

Soon after this, when I was wondering at their hardness of heart, and hearing of their continual calumny, he spoke these words to me, “ When they shall cease to deal treacherously thou shalt deal treacherously with them.” This passage shewed me that they were to fill up their measure this way, and to go on reproaching me till they were weary of it; and that some would then desire to come back again; and that others, in their distress, when the judgments of God overtook them,

them, would come to me for my counsel and my prayers; and, further, that I should be a favour of death unto death to them in my ministry, and a witness against them in the day of judgment: the former has come to pass already, and so will the latter.

When Europe appeared in such confusion under the influence of that spirit of rebellion which the devil, by the instrumentality of Tom Paine, poured out upon men, I had long begged of God to shew me what part of his word contained this perilous time, and he told me it was "the hour of temptation," as is related in a sermon lately published by me. And it was explained to me as being the same trial as came upon the Jews in the days of Jeremiah; and that it was sent to try the obedience of professors, and the loyalty of the nations; and I soon perceived that no class of men in this nation were more easily taken, nor more effectually bound in these bonds of iniquity, than the hypocrites in Zion, and impostors in the ministry; and the calamity of both will come suddenly upon them. Thus my dear sister may see that what God speaks and applies comes to pass. But all the fearful predictions which came to me from Satan, in the days of my trouble, fell to the ground. And, as Satan can apply scripture, so can he also work by dreams. All the fearful and miserable dreams which he tormented me with, such as dying by suicide, being thrown into wells,

wells, and down unfathomable precipices, and being burnt alive, and of coming to the worst of ends, and dying innumerable deaths; have none of them, as yet, come to pass; nor do I believe they ever will; whereas the dreams which came from God all came to pass. One which I had in my distress was, I was climbing up the outside of a most spacious fine building, but many enemies opposed me; but I gained the height in spite of them all.

Another was a most furious attack of a dreadful and formidable monster to devour me; but, though he made several attempts, yet he could not come near me by several feet. I wondered at this, and, looking up, saw a beautiful man smiling at me, and holding a chain in his hand, which chain was round the body of the beast, just as a monkey is chained. And I believe the Saviour holds the devil in chains to this day; so that he cannot destroy God's people, though he often tries.

I had another dream, which was that of two innumerable armies drawn up to engage on a very high and spacious plain. I was there to watch their motions, and to bear tidings; and, as soon as they began to engage, off I set over the plain and down into a narrow road, through a low and hollow field: the cannon and muskets roaring as I ran, I thought they might kill me; but, looking towards the plain, I saw a very high
 7 stone

stone wall between me and the plain, and that the plain was level with the top of the wall, and the village to which I bore tidings was in a lane at the bottom of the field in which I was. Soon after this the war broke out; and I have borne tidings throughout this war, and the wall of salvation hath protected both me, and those who have received my tidings, even to this day.

Soon after this I had another dream, which was, that I saw a very high and strong fence, somewhat like posts and rails, but exceeding strong, and the top of it reached to the clouds; on the other side I saw a numerous herd of black bulls, exceeding fierce, and they leaped, many of them, clear over this high fence. When I awoke, I conceived the high fence to be the laws of nations, and the boundaries or frontiers of countries; and, when I heard how the French overran divers nations, and how the disaffected were let loose here among us, I thought of the fat bulls of Bashan, mentioned in the Psalms and other scriptures. Some I saw in my dream could not leap over, and those that did could not destroy the fence, for that stood firm, just as it was. And so I have seen it: the bulwarks of national laws stand as they did; and our disaffected, who tried hard to leap over, could not; and those that did will never leap back again. This my dream came fresh to my mind when I saw in the newspapers that the French commander in Italy informed the

Directory

Directory of his engagement on the mountains, saying that " his army fought above the clouds."

Thus I have informed my dear sister of the various applications of the most terrible passages of scripture to me in my deepest distress, and of the fearful dreams ; neither of which came to pass, being the work of the devil, to keep me from Christ. And this I was confirmed in by the Lord's visits to me ; for every glimpse that I had of the Saviour dispersed these dismal things ; but, when he withdrew, then they came again. It is with the seeking sinner as it was with the lunatic in the gospel, while he was coming to Christ the devil threw him down. Luke ix. 42. Furthermore : not only by fearful dreams and false applications hath Satan distressed me, but even by horrible sensations in the night ; and that even when I have gone to my bed in the most profound peace and tranquillity, without the least sense of any guilt, shyness, or distance, between me and my God ; yea, and sometimes when I have been much favoured with his sensible presence overnight. I have often, in former years, waked up in the dead of the night, and felt that my comforts were all gone, and a most melancholy and dismal gloom hung upon my mind, and such horrors and terrors had succeeded as quite terrified me, and such darkness as might be felt, with a multitude of the most ghastly spectres drawn upon my imagination, with death and the grave represented in their
most

most dreadful forms and awful consequences, These things drove me to examine myself, and to seek the face of the Lord ; and, when I found that prayer dispelled them, and the Lord appeared still propitious to me, and that none of these things brought any guilt on my conscience, and that they were not attended with the burden of unpardoned sin, nor with the piercing sensations of unappeased wrath, nor with the curse of the law, nor with the apprehensions of an angry God, nor with any dread of damnation ; I concluded that they came from the devil, and the word of God bore me out : “ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty ; such shall not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day.” Psalm xc. I was not a little exercised with very foul dreams also, but prayer removed them all ; and Satan hath dropped this method of proceeding against me for many years, for he knows that I am, in some measure, up to it.

Now, as Satan thus works against sensible sinners, whose hearts are honest, and who come constantly to the light to have their real state discovered, and who are made willing to take up the cross, to follow Christ, and to be saved by him ; I say, as Satan works against these by fearful
dreams,

dreams, and applications of the most terrible passages of scripture ; so, on the other hand, by applying the promises to hypocrites, and by encouraging dreams, he also deceives them, and leads them into perilous presumption. I once was acquainted with a great professor, who was a man of much wealth, and who stood very high in his confidence, too high to admit of any doubting in believers. This person invited me and my wife to come and dine with him, which we did ; and he told us of a wonderful view that he had had, and of a voice that had spoken to him ; both of which were respecting the sonship of Christ ; and he was so pleased and charmed with his wild conceit, that he put it in the newspaper. He and I could not agree in our opinions ; we differed widely. He laboured hard to gain me over to his sentiments, but I was inflexible ; and therefore he ordered me out of his house, and I obeyed and went out ; and, as soon as I was gone out, I told my wife that that man would go mad ; and, about seven years after that, he went raving mad, and died so.

I knew another, a woman, and a very sensible one, and who attended for many years one of the brightest ministers which the church of England hath lately been honoured with, and was very fond of his ministry ; nor could she fit under any other. This woman had the promises of the gospel continually applied to her, as she thought,
and

and mentioned many of them to me ; and I once asked her how it was that none of them came to pass ? She replied, “ I know that they must all be fulfilled,” and added, “ God cannot be just except he does fulfil them.” Soon after this she had heard that I had insisted that God required worship in spirit and in truth ; and that a form of prayer was not sufficient ; and that some things in our forms of prayer were repugnant to scripture. At this she was much exasperated, and said, “ Such a fellow as that presume to take the work of our great reformers to pieces !” At last she began to sink in her confidence, and fearful bondage came upon her, which made her a burden to herself, and to all about her. A near relation of hers brought her up to my house in Winchester-Row ; but I was not at home. The request of her relation was, that she might come and lodge and board with me. My wife gave her to understand that it would not be agreeable ; so she went away, and not long afterwards she hung herself upon her bed’s head ; which fully convinced me that the implacable enemy of mankind had deceived her by applying those promises to her.

Poor Tom Smith, whom you know, or at least have heard something of, was wonderfully tossed to and fro, up and down, this way, by every scripture that came to his mind, however contradictory ; as for instance ; at some times the Lord had told him he was to go and settle at such a place, and then

then another text contradicted it, that he was to stay where he was. He mentioned to me the fearful state that he had been in, and the temptations that he had to suicide, and of the people that were gathered together about him in this his distress, and of the sudden deliverance, from misery to laughter, by the application of a passage of scripture, which I now forget, and which first set him off in a profession, as one that had obtained mercy; and of his joining himself to a church in the country; and, after some time, that one of my pamphlets fell into his hands, and of his reading it; and of this passage coming into his mind, "I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter." This he looked upon as an order from God to come to London to see me; and he came, but could not find me, and therefore went back again; and, if I mistake not, he came again, and found me not. However, the same text followed him, and he came the third time, if I mistake not, but not succeeding, was returning home; but, seeing a road across the fields which led to Hampstead, some passage occurred to his mind directing him to go there; and thither he went, and inquired of a shoemaker if he knew me: he answered, he did, and gave him a shilling, and sent him to another person in Hampstead, who knew where I lived; he gave him a direction to me, and put sixpence more into his hand. This appeared a kind Providence, for he had no money in his pocket; it

served also to confirm him that he was right in seeking me. At first I could make nothing of him, but thought him deranged, and gave him a trifle. However, he kept coming to me ; for, Providence thus appearing for him confirmed him more and more that he was to go and see his supposed Peter ; but, when he began to sink, and found his hopes give way, and madness come on, he was much astonished that he could be thus deceived, but was forced to own that the whole was nothing but the works of the devil ; and, indeed, self-abhorrence, godly sorrow, evangelical repentance flowing from pardoning love, tenderness, meekness, and an abiding sense of his insufficiency for the great work, never appeared in him.

I once knew a gracious woman who laboured long under heavy persecution both from her husband and his friends, and who was long kept in fears and distress by the following text : “ He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country : there shalt thou die.” Isa. xxii. 18. It is spoken of Shebna’s captivity, who was steward and treasurer of the king’s household ; and the devil applied it to this poor woman, and she construed it to mean that persecution was coming on the church, and that she should be banished into a strange country for her religion. And true enough she was, for soon after she died, and made a most glorious end ; nor was there any violent turnings or tossings in her death, for she was taken
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ill, and died in less than ten hours after. Thus the devil can apply scripture when it will serve his own turn, and promote his own interest. His aims with the children of God are to discourage them, to raise doubts in the mind, and to stir up unbelief; to call the truth of God, and the work of God on their souls, into question, that they may murmur, rebel, be discontented with their state, and unthankful to God for what they have. And here he often prevails by damping their affections, and so robs God of his praise and glory, by tempting the believer that he has no grace to thank God for; and this he partially believes, and so holds back the Lord's revenue. This is a temptation, it is plain, because every visitation of God disproves it, and expels it.

By applying scripture the devil encourages the presumptuous, and blows them up with pride and vain confidence, to dream of the goodness of their state, without any sight or sense of the heinousness of sin, or any humility under it, or sorrow on the account of it, and even to expect the great reward of inheritance without either pardon, righteousness, or holiness, by the Holy Ghost, which alone can give us right unto it, and meetness for it. Under these delusions the consciences of some are scared, so that they have no bands in their death; and the presumptuous, he goes on till his hope expires with him: " Their hope shall be as

the giving up of the ghost." Job xi. 20. In short, every believer is conscious to himself that he has a claim upon God, as his covenant God, and an interest in him. This is made manifest to him by the Spirit's work, and by the witness which the Spirit bears with our spirits; and such souls do expect to be dealt with as sons, not as slaves or criminals; and that the promises are yea and amen in Christ, and the reward sure to all the feed; a daily cross, and an ever-abiding Comforter; prosperity and adversity; purging the branch with trials, and making it more fruitful by fresh indulgences, and with union and communion with the living Vine. Thus the sheep, which enter by the right door, go in and out, and find pasture. When God speaks to his children his word never contradicts, but always agrees with that teaching which the holy anointing teacheth. Sometimes God speaks to encourage hope and expectation, as to Habakkuk: "The vision is for an appointed time; wait for it." Sometimes to support and fortify: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." Sometimes he speaks to stir up diligence: "Seek ye my face." And sometimes to encourage to prayer: "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." But either power, life, peace, mercy, or love, always attend his voice to those that love his

his name. But sure I am that he never will send a word to the hearts of his children to make them mourn after his presence all their days, and yet mourn in vain. No: they that mourn shall be comforted: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." And all real praise must spring from his sensible presence, not his absence; from his goodness, not his anger. Therefore expect the fulfilment of his promises: "I will bear them from the womb, and to your old age I am he; and to hoary hairs will I carry you; even I will bear, and I will deliver you." Dear sister, adieu.

Ever yours in faith and affection,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XXXVII.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I WAS very glad to hear, by one of your friends from London, that your health was much established by your late excursion. I sincerely hope it may please God to continue it to you; and likewise that it would please him that you may again have a prosperous journey to us, that you may come in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ. I would it was in my power to say a great deal about what I received from your last letter. But I have apparently lost all that I then received from it. Had I wrote at the time I received it, I do not know where my pen would have run to: and this was what kept me from writing; for my mind has been forely exercised about my having made so free with you, in writing you such long letters. But, whether this distress comes from Satan or not, I have not wisdom to discover. However, at the time I read your letter it did sweetly confirm the work on my soul, and I seemed to be brought to a point about every thing that had been done upon me. But
 now

now I have lost all; and I begin to call almost every thing in question.

It is in vain for me to attempt to describe the darkness, deadness, fretfulness, and rebellion, which I feel within. I complain with David, that "my strength is dried up like a potsherd." I do believe that there never was such a composition of ingredients in the world before as I am made up of. I am unstable as water; my strength is so small that I faint in every day of adversity. However, it can be of no use troubling you with such things as these; therefore I must conclude; but, amidst all, believe me ever to remain

Your affectionate friend

In the briars and thorns.

PHILOMELA:

The master desires his kind love to you. I send you this only by way of telling you that I cannot write.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

I PROMISED myself much happiness and satisfaction in the hope and prospect I had of one more interview with you at Gasson's Bower; and I have no doubt but you expected a second benefit in hearing the joyful sound once more in the old barn. But, alas! our purposes were broken off, even the thoughts of our heart. Job xvii. 11. We decreed the thing, but it was not established unto us. I was to go to the barn, and you sick to bed. O, the disappointment! Had I set out on a tour of pleasure I might justly have expected it; but I went hoping and expecting to hear the voice of my beloved. And was you disappointed? Is there no voice but that of the chief Shepherd by the mouth of his servants? Is there not a voice in providence? And is there not a voice in his rod? "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Micah vi. 9. The Lord's voice crieth to the city of Zion now as well as to Jerusalem in the days of old; and those who have wisdom shall
see

see the Lord's name; and that name is the angel of the covenant, who went in the cloudy pillar through the wilderness. This name is to be seen by those who have wisdom in the hidden parts of the heart: "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts." Therefore hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it; for all these things are appointed for thee, and many such things are with him.

I was much surpris'd last Lord's-day to hear that thou wast not as yet returned to the King's Dale, but that you was in hope of quitting the Bower this week, 'being somewhat restored to health again. I wish much to know whether this hath been among the all things that work together for good to them that love God. Hath he fulfilled his promise? Hath he strengthened thee upon the bed of languishing? Hath he made all thy bed in thy sickness? I am persuaded by the Lord that he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Lam. iii. 33. It is to empty us of self, that we may favour more of him and of his good ointments. If the vessel of mercy goes but for a short space without the rod, without the cross, without discipline, without afflictions, without the furnace, it soon settles upon its old lees, and the scent remains, and we favour not of the things of God, but those of flesh and blood. Sanctified trials banish the spirit of this world from the mind, and keep those worldly cares
(which

(which too often choke the word) from rooting in the heart. When God comes with a fiery trial he goes through these briers and thorns, and consumes them all together. Isa. xxvii. 4. It was these that overtopped the good seed in the thorny-ground hearers. Fiery trials scorch these at the root, and the blasts of divine resentment wither them; and legal bondage to fear drives us to care for matters more weighty, and to seek for a more enduring substance; and, when sensible union with the living Vine begins again to take place, a better crop is produced. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Isa. lv. 13. Divine life within, and a verdant profession without, make the believer appear as a fir-tree, the sap of which is always up, and the leaf of which is never withered, but always green; and, when the robe of humility is put on, and the influences of divine grace perfume the soul, it is like the myrtle, low, green, and fragrant; and where these things are experienced, enjoyed, and felt, it is to be to the Lord for a name; it is the fulfilment and full proclamation of the name of the Lord, proclaimed before Moses; I mean, that of the Lord's being gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, &c. &c. And, as this is to be to the Lord for a name
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of praise, so it is to be to the Lord God for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off, Isa. lv. 13. It is like the rainbow, that is a sign to God of the promise that he hath made to all men, that he will drown the world no more, and a sign to man that he shall not be drowned. But to us the former is a sign that God will no more be wrath with us nor rebuke us, and a sure sign to us that we never shall be drowned in destruction and perdition. The fir and the myrtle shall not be cut off; they never shall be cut asunder with the sword of justice, nor be separated from the communion and fellowship of God the Father, and God the Son: they shall ever abide in the favour of both. I think my dear sister is a good deal relapsed into legal bondage; she has lost the Lord's presence with respect to sensible enjoyment; and now she lives too near home she creeps too much into self, and pores too much over the members and motions of the old man; and she has lived upon the old stock of past experiences so long that she has nothing left but the bare remembrance of them, and the hope which past experience hath wrought in her. Manna in the wilderness was to be gathered every day, except the sabbath; and you know that hidden manna is promised to us under the gospel. Water from the rock followed Israel, and they drank of it; and we have the promise of being watered every moment, and of being kept night and day. When the land of Canaan was to
rest

rest on the seventh year, a blessing was promised on the sixth; and on the eighth year, when the new crop came in, some of the old store was to be found, that the householder might mix it with the new. And every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God is to be like one of those old householders; he is to bring forth out of his treasures things new and old. But who are these stores for? The Lord tells you: "At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved!" Song vii, 13. The passover offering was to be offered up but once in a year, in remembrance of Israel's great deliverance, and to lead their faith to their great Deliverer then to come, and to a greater deliverance by him; and we know that Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, and we are to keep the feast. But then there was to be a lamb offered every morning and evening throughout the year, which was called the daily sacrifice; and with which was to be offered a perpetual incense. This was to lead their faith to look daily to the Lamb of God, both for help and for life; and the sweet perfume of unctuous prayer and praise, under the influence of the spirit of supplication, must, as our incense, attend our daily looks to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. We are to live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

At thy first deliverance thou hadst little else but
banqueting

banqueting for a whole year; then came weaning time; the breast was put up, and stronger meat was brought forth; the sincere milk of the word was left for other little ones, who are coming after, and for those who are unskilful in the word of righteousness; whilst knowledge and understanding are to feed them which are of full age. Ezekiel's roll and John's little book, were both to be eaten, and they were sweet in their mouth; but, when they came into the belly, and discovered all the innermost parts of that, attended with the candle of the Lord, it caused much bitterness there, through the risings of inbred corruptions against the heavenly contents. John's little book produced the wise man's twofold ingredients: "The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy." And this hath been the experience of all that ever received the word of God in power, in the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance. As for those who receive it into their head, and have their natural passions moved and stirred up under the sound of it, their joys seem long to abide; they are always the same; they have no changes of joy and bitterness, prosperity and adversity; they are not in trouble as other men, nor plagued as the people of God are; their strength is firm, until God's fan, or the midnight cry, comes on them; and then all their joys wither, like grass upon the house-top, "where-with the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth

bindeth sheaves his bosom." But God's choice of his people is made manifest to them in the furnace of affliction. When temptation and persecution began to fall heavy upon the apostles and primitive saints, when the sun waxed hot, and the fiery trial came on, the wayside hearers, the stony and thorny-ground hearers, those who went a warfare at their own cost, and those who began to build and were not able to finish; all went back and fell away. But God will bring his own elect through fire and through water: the former shall not kindle upon them, nor shall the latter drown them; in the furnace their election is made sure to them; "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will purify them as silver is purified, and try them as gold is tried; they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them, and I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Here is God's acknowledgment of them; he is not ashamed to be called their God: and here is their warrantable and compulsive claim upon him. By the faith of God's elect they shall say, The Lord is my God. And would my dear sister escape the furnace? Would she wish to carry all her dross and tin with her? Would she desire a whole heart that needs no physician? Doth not the Lord promise to look to, and dwell with, them that are of an humble and a contrite heart, and tremble at his word? to revive the heart of the humble, and the spirit of the contrite ones?

Come,

Come, old girl, thou hast been compassing the old mount, and poring over the old fretting leprosy long enough ; look once more, with Jonah, towards the holy temple. Jonah did more by looking than he did by kicking. Looking at the brazen serpent had better effect than looking at the bite, or complaining of the pain. Manoa and his wife did nothing but look on while the angel did wonderously before them ; and this was all that the disciples did when the great work was finished. There was none to help, there was none to uphold. The disciples followed to see the end. Matt. xxvi. 58. And what did we do when the great work was wrought in us ? We looked to him, and were saved ; we looked to him, and overcame him. And we must continue at this ; we must not look at the things which are seen, for they discourage us, but at the things which are not seen. We must look at the eternal things that Christ is in full possession of for us ; yea, we must run the race set before us, looking to the great possessor, the author and finisher of our faith.

If accused by Satan, law, or conscience, where can we look but to the advocate ? If exercised with God's chastening rod, or the reflections of fatherly anger, there is no where to look but to the great Mediator. If iniquities prevail against us, there is no hope but in the fountain opened by Christ, and in the fulness of grace treasured up in

Christ. If sick, we must look to the great Physician ; if our own heart condemn us, to the end of the law for righteousness ; and, if weak, to the hope of his people, and to the strength of the children of Israel. Dost thou believe, my sister, that the whole body mystical, from the least to the greatest, is complete in the everlasting Father, Head, and Representative, of the church ? Canst thou believe what the divine Bridegroom asserts, that those who are called to the fellowship of him are all fair, and that there is no spot in them ? Dost thou believe that, when God laid our sins upon him, his righteousness became ours ? that when he was apprehended we were let go ? that when he died we suffered the law in him, who is a part of ourselves ? that we were crucified with Christ, and with his dead body we arose ? that for our justification he left the tomb, and we were raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; accepted in the beloved, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and in him without fault before the throne ? Hold fast then the head, to which the whole body is knit and joined, and from which the divine unction descends which every joint supplieth. All the bands of love and peace which hold us together, and all the joints of union, friendship, judgment, and affection, and all the confirmation and renewing of these, are of him and from him. This blessed head ministers nourishment to the whole body,

which

which body is bound up in the bundle of life, or in the bond of eternal love with the Lord our God.

The temptations and trials which have lately fallen to thy share are no other than such as are common to men. After I had been for a considerable time much indulged with the Lord's presence, and with such tender mercy and loving-kindness as is unspeakable, and with the fullest assurance of the reality of the work, and of my interest in his everlasting salvation, inasmuch as not a fear, a scruple, or even the shadow of a doubt, remained about it, it pleased the Lord to try me sorely; not only with the loss of these heavenly visits, blessings, and never-to-be-forgotten sensations, but all my corruptions appeared in all their infernal vigour. This sunk me; and peevishness, rebellion, and fretfulness, followed: then I went to striving against sin in my own strength; and this betrayed me into the shackles of legal bondage, till an army of unexpected terrors surrounded me, and the apparent anger of God, as I then supposed, pursued me on every side; and Satan, with his evil insinuations, suggested to me that all was a delusion; that God had done it to extort confessions of my own vileness and just deserts from my own mouth, that he might condemn me by them. And here I was almost ready to cast away all my confidence, despond, and get into madness. But the Lord fulfilled his promise again and again;

for he revived the work, and was as sure to shine upon it, and bring it forth to the light again, as ever Satan and unbelief were to call it in question. And so wilt thou find it, and so thou hast often found it already. The sentence of justification passes through the court of conscience at once, and sensibly silences every accuser that the poor condemned sinner has. Upon this both law and justice, sin, Satan, and conscience, let us go; and from that hour the tree of righteousness stands complete in the Lord, having both righteousness and strength. This work is perfect, and is not by any inquisition to be brought into court in order to be sifted up and canvassed over again. This would reflect dishonour upon the omniscient and impartial Judge. No: but when God hides his face it is for the trial of our faith, and that by his going and coming he may familiarize himself to us, and be the better known by us, and that we may be led to distinguish between flesh and spirit. The adversary takes advantage of these our desertions, and confuses us, and casts us into a hasty spirit, that he may confound and baffle our judgment; and when we are filled with confusion he spreads a dismal gloom over the mind, and obscures our evidences; and in our hurry the Spirit's witness is not attended to. But when the Lord comes he brings us forth to the light again, and we behold his righteousness. Then for our shame we receive double, and for confusion we rejoice in our portion;

portion; yea, in this world we possess double, and in the world to come everlasting joy shall be unto us (Isa. lxi. 7), ~~the~~ the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

I long to know the state of your corn, whether your lord and master hath waded through this unparalleled harvest. It hath fallen to our lot to be cast on the stage of this world when perilous times are come. For many months before this war broke out I had little before my eyes but calamitous times, and nothing but wars and rumours of wars followed my fears; and now, for these five months back, famine is continually in my view, and little else upon my mind. Seed-time and harvest, promised to all, seems this year to be denied to us. And I have long prophesied that the awful rebellion discovered in this hour of temptation would be followed by some external or internal judgment; by famine, pestilence, or something awful. But no judgment so fatal as an internal one; I mean that of being given up to blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and being left under the awful curse of God. Many of our impostors and hypocrites in profession have been so engaged in political matters, and in the concerns of government, that they have neglected their lawful calling, and the concerns of their family, and have brought themselves to want bread. But it looks now as if they must fetch up their lost

time by working over-hours, even to keep themselves from starving.

I know, by the word of the Lord, that oppression will be the crying sin throughout this world when the Saviour comes to take to himself his great power to reign. And this sin will extort more lamentable cries from the poor and needy than even Pharaoh's cruelty did from the children of Israel; and a more conspicuous Deliverer will appear than ever Moses was. Read Psalm lxxii. And, what is more astonishing, I have fainted in praying God to remove what I see to be coming on. I have no heart to pray against it, my faith fails; and, if I attempt it, it is against wind and tide, for the Spirit helps me not; nor will he ever make intercession for us contrary to the will of God. Therefore I take it for granted that it is appointed for us. Not long ago our oppressors contrived an artificial famine; and it seems now as if God would send a real one, that the oppressor may have an opportunity of filling up his measure; for sure I am that God will never forget that work.

At present I am but poorly, very weak inwardly; which makes me often look to the end of my race; for, look which way I may, I see nothing but causes of grief and sorrow; and yet the whole bulk of professors seem to sit still and be at rest. They see the whole country blessed with gospel ministers,

nisters, and the work of the Lord going prosperously on every where; but I am so blind that I can see nothing of it, but quite the reverse; for, go where I will, I find here and there a poor perishing sinner starving for want of the bread of life, and there are none to break it unto them. In my view of things this is a time of spiritual famine, when many of the poor and needy seek water, and there is none. Wells without water, and clouds without rain, we have plenty; but the ministry of the Spirit, and the power of God unto salvation, is rarely to be found. But we must leave the government upon the shoulders of the wonderful Counsellor; for none of the subjects of his kingdom shall ever perish, but shall have eternal life. I have run quite out of the way; but it is out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Our glass is running out apace, and the bitterness of death is past; life and immortality hath been brought to light in our souls; the incarnate Word hath quickened us; he hath chastened us fore, but he hath not given us over unto death. Then "wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?" Out of the dark regions of the shadow of death have we been brought; our sins have been removed, and our guilt purged; he hath begotten us to a lively hope, and blessed us with inward peace; he hath circumcised our hearts to love him, and will not

suffer any thing to satisfy us short of his presence, his grace, and the light of his countenance; and, though these be often denied us, yet the time cometh when we shall see him as he is; and our present sorrows and sufferings shall be all forgotten; when we shall hear no more the groanings of Zion, nor shall her children say any more, "Behold, I am sick;" for all the remains of corruption shall be done away. Farewell, dear sister; and let me know by a few lines, as soon as you are able to write, what support, what relief, what encouragement, what views, prospects, meditations, smiles, or visits, you have been favoured with, in this last furnace; and you will much oblige

Your affectionate friend and brother,

The Desert.

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XXXIX.

To 'NOCTUA ALBIDA, in the Desert.

I HAVE received yours, and do most kindly thank you for the same. I was sorry to hear of your inward weakness; should be glad to know if it hath pleased the Lord to re-establish your health.

Some things in your letter convinced me that you still remain a prophet of the Lord to me: for you have described my feelings as true as if you had known all the workings of my mind for this fortnight past; though I know you could not have received my last little scrap of a letter till after yours was written.

Relapsed into legal bondage I am. O! it is a wretched captivity. You tell me to look once more towards God's holy temple. But, alas! I have no faith in exercise on the object of faith, nor yet on the promise. I feel the old man alive in all his members. Never, I think, did I experience such a frame since I descended from the mount. God has put me into his furnace, and has supported me there hitherto; though at times I fear his rod has been spent on me in vain. I am shut up from

the public means, where my soul has been often quickened under the word, through indisposition of body, for my tabernacle is kept very weak and low. Satan preaches me many lectures, and tries to raise in my mind hard thoughts of my God; and he too often succeeds. It is poor living on the old stock; indeed, it only keeps hope from giving up the ghost; it is living too near home, as you well observe. O! how does my soul long to have this veil rent. But I know that nothing will do it but a sight of Christ crucified. O! that he would work in my heart that contrition and godly sorrow, that with Mary I might sit at his dear feet and weep it out. My soul craves no greater blessing in this world. But the Lord has, I believe, some harder lessons to teach me; and I am slow of heart to learn, as well as to believe. I want to distinguish the voice of God in his rod, which you so sweetly treat of in your letter. But I am brought into darkness, and not into light, so that I cannot discern; therefore I need stroke upon stroke. My cry is, with Job, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me." I well know where the cause lies; it is that folly that is bound up in my heart; and there is so much of it in me that I fear there can be little else but the rod assigned for me. God grant I may be helped to bow and submit to his will. I know the rod is in the covenant: and I do believe that what I am called to endure, is not vindictive wrath, but
fatherly

fatherly chastisement, intended for my good. But it is hard to bear ; and the mind and thoughts will find employment ; and it is, as you observe, poring over the old man and his workings ; and I think sometimes that this gives Satan an advantage against me. But I cannot do the things that I would : “ but the evil which I would not, that I do.” How very unlike the myrtle you speak of am I, whose sap is, as you observe, always up, and whose leaf is ever green. But sure I am, and that from bitter experience, that there is not one grace of the Spirit will flourish in my heart when the beloved of my soul withdraws and hides himself from me. I often look over some of your former letters, which I received when in the midst of my joys, where you warned me of such days of darkness and desertion coming on me, by telling me that the days would come that I should desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, but I should not see it. But I would not believe it. I could not entertain a thought that I should ever fall into legal bondage again. But, alas ! it has fallen to my share over and over again. Therefore, as Jesus said to one that came to him, I was to go and learn what that meaneth. And sure I am, as you well observe, that Satan can bring a dismal gloom on the mind. His aim with me lately is to bring my mind into darkness, by perplexing me with some part of the word of God ; by endeavouring to make one part clash with another.

another. I have something at present which much puzzles me, and has for these two months past; and I do suspect he has a hand in it. But, as you have kindly invited me to use freedom, I would beg your thoughts on the passage where Abraham was commanded by God to offer up his son; and, after the angel had forbidden it, it is said that he looked and beheld a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, and he took and offered it up instead of his son. But the mystery which I want light upon is this, how this ram can be a type of Christ as the sinner's surety. And yet it must be, because God accepted it as Isaac. Now, though Christ was God, yet he never suffered in his divine nature. Yet the blood of a ram, when slain, is expressly said, in Exodus, to be the blood of sprinkling; and, in Numbers, it is said to be the atonement. Nor can I understand how the passover lamb was a type of Christ; because he is, in the New Testament, said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. When first it was brought to my mind I saw it a mystery, but did not think my being enlightened into it was any thing essential. But, as it dwelt on my mind, it led me on to the mystery of the Trinity, which I know I am very dark about; and I began to tremble, fearing I should be left to fall into some error respecting that great mystery, and so be left to stumble on the dark mountains; and, from the time my mind was oppressed with it, the dear Redeemer

Redeemer of my soul has been more and more obscured from my sight. I should have mentioned it to you when I was last with you, but I thought it better to make it part of the subject of a letter ; then I should, perhaps, have your answer to refer to at any time, which I have often found a second and third benefit from. I hope the Lord will give you something by which my mind may be relieved from its present perplexity. The latter part of your letter caused me some faintings of heart. It is a sad sign to a nation when God stops the breath of prayer, in his servants, for averting the judgments which they foresee coming on. Those must be bad days when God will not suffer his servants to stand in the gap. However, the word is gone out of his mouth that it shall be well with the righteous. I hope we shall not have a famine of the word, and then it shall be well with our souls, however we may be called to suffer in our bodies. I have tried to persuade H—— T—— to give you a few lines respecting what you wish to know ; but I do not know whether I shall prevail or not. I fear your patience will be tired out in reading this letter of complaints. Can only add, I remain

Yours, in the best of bonds,

In the King's prison.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER

LETTER XL.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

I RECEIVED thine epistle safe, and, by the contents of it, I perceive that thou hast finished thy song in the night. The melody of thy harp is exchanged for mourning, and thine organ to the voice of them that weep. Nevertheless I shall not change thy name, for thou must and shalt sing again; "They shall sing in the ways of the Lord." This the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. Thou must, my sister, come in the good old way, the four first stages of which have been long pointed out. Noah's ark was to be made with first, second, and third stories; but the dove, when she returned, rested on the top till Noah put forth his hand and took her in to him. This ark appears to me to be more a type of the church than of Christ, for the church is seldom without unclean as well as clean; but no unclean creature (strictly speaking) can be experimentally in him, much less shut in by him, till the storms of wrath be past.

The temple of the Lord had an outer court, called the court of the Gentiles; the next was the
court

court where the worshipping Israelites assembled; the next was the sanctuary; where the priests performed their service; the next was the most holy place, accessible to none but God and his high-priest; and he must go through the court of the Gentiles, then through the court of the Israelites, then through the sanctuary and into the holy place. So Noah went from the earth to the lower story, then to the second, then to the third, and lastly he removed the covering of the ark, and looked out at the top. We must come, according to Peter, out of this world. This causes many to think it strange that we run not to the same excess of riot. Then come convictions of sin and sore temptations: "Though now, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations." Then come better days: "Whom, having not seen, ye love; and though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But, when these joys are withdrawn, it appears as if some strange thing had happened unto us. This fiery trial is to try our faith, that it may appear more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, and shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when the Lord will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" and "Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." When this trial is over thou wilt
find

find thy feet standing in a more even place. So says Peter, "After that ye have suffered a while, the Lord make you perfect, strengthen, stablish, settle you." Keep these stages in view. There is, and must be, a coming out of the world; and, when this is done, there is a watching at Wisdom's gate, which answers to the court of the Gentiles; and, even when kind invitations come suitable to our case, we must not ascend: "When thou art bidden to a wedding," says Christ, "sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden." We must imitate the Saviour. He first appeared in the form of a servant; and, when the law comes home to us, our baseness as bond-servants appears; bound under sin, Satan, death, and the law, we are. This sets us sensibly down in the dark regions of the shadow of death, and in the strong holds of sin and Satan. Here Christ shines first upon us: in this our low estate he remembers us, and says unto us, "Friends, go up higher." The next stage brings us to his feet: they shall sit down at his feet: "Every one shall receive of thy words." Now he appears pacified towards us, and we remember our own evil way, which was not good, and loathe ourselves in our own sight for our iniquities. But he dwells with the humble and the contrite, "to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones." Now he puts us forth into the joy of the Lord. This encourages us to freedom

dom and sweet familiarity, to communion and fellowship. And here our mountain seems to stand strong, and we are ready to think that we shall never be moved. I know of but one stage higher than this that ever I arrived at. This stage brings Christ nigh, as evidently set forth crucified among us; and we look at, admire, and wonder at him. This is the Lord manifesting himself to us, and dwelling in us. But after this he leads our thoughts higher; for, after we have looked at him, mourned over his sufferings, and been stung with hatred to self and sin on the account of them, he raises us up with another appearance of himself, and that is as risen from the dead, crying out, "All hail!" This raises us up to his glorification, and we rise to a lively hope of his resurrection from the dead. This comforts our souls, that his sufferings are over, and that "death hath no more dominion over him." And now our hope is admitted within the veil, we rise to newness of life under the influence of the Spirit of love and joy; and not only are our affections admitted to God's right hand, where he sitteth, but we are "made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This is the highest stage in the divine life. The highest receptacle in the temple from the ground-floor was the galleries. Ezek. xli. 15, and xlii. 3. Into these (if I mistake not) the Jewish women were admitted. This is dwelling on high, and seeing the King in his beauty; whereas,

whereas, when he is exhibited to us upon the cross, he looks in his sufferings like a sacrifice, or as one made sin for us, and as numbered with the transgressors, but by no means as a king. It was as glorified, enthroned, and crowned with glory and honour, that he appeared to Ezekiel, Daniel, and John. And in this appearance the holy spouse saw him; "The hair of thy head is like purple: the King is held in the galleries." Song vii. 5. Purple is a royal colour, and in his royalty she saw him; and, though she had often had a glimpse of him as leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills, standing behind the wall, looking in at the window, and shewing himself through the lattice, and oftentimes had felt the finger of his power making her bowels to move, and had felt his name as an ointment poured forth, and at times caught hold of him, yet she could not retain him, as she owns, "My beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone; my soul failed when he spake," &c. &c. But at last he tells her to turn away her eyes from him, for she had overcome him: then she says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." And he certainly is held or bound in the galleries; for by heavenly-minded souls, who have enjoyed him, and who never can rest without him, nor find any satisfaction in any thing short of him, he is held, and to such he is bound, in the bond of everlasting love, and that by his own promise, and by his
own

own act and deed : " I will betroth thee unto me in judgment ; I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, in loving-kindness, in faithfulness, and for ever ; and thou shalt know the Lord." And, as he is thus bound to a wife, he will never seek to be loosed. John, in his Revelation, saw him in his priestly garments among the candle-sticks, and as king upon his white horse ; but as glorified in both. This wonderful appearance so astonished John that he fell to the ground ; but it was intended to raise John's conceptions higher than before ; for, though he had known Christ after the flesh, yet from that time forward he knew him so no more..

I have been much of late meditating on what Paul calls the new man in us. Jeremiah says, " Thy word was found, and I ate it, and it was the joy and rejoicing of my heart." John and Ezekiel ate the roll and the little book, and declared that they were sweet as honey ; but what that mouth is which feeds so sweetly on the promises and on the passover lamb, is hard to describe. " A feast of fat things, of marrow and fatness, and of wines on the lees well refined," it certainly is. We have an altar to eat at, and certain it is that the new man has got his mouth which feeds upon spiritual provision, digests it, and receives nourishment and satisfaction from it ; but this mouth remains a mystery to me. The new man has got his nose, but I cannot tell what it is. All Christ's garments

smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces; and God doth make manifest the savour of the knowledge of Christ among his people. This we know; and, on the other hand, if one come into our company whose scent remains in him, whose scent is not changed, who is settled on his old lees, what a stinking savour do such little foxes send forth! But who can describe that nose that so sensibly distinguishes between the odour of Christ's garments, and the stench of the foxes, and the stinking savour of dead flies? Nor is the new man without his ears. What is spoken to the outward ears hath no effect if it goes no farther: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak friendly to her heart." Hosea ii. 14. Hence it is said of Christ that "he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." Isa. xlii. 2. And yet many will say in the last day, "We have eaten in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." They heard the voice of the man; but it is only the dead, or self-condemned, that hear the voice of the Son of God and live: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." John xviii. 37. And all his sheep hear his voice, and follow and distinguish his voice from all others; and Christ hath dropped his benediction both upon such ears and eyes: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." And I know that he hath often spoke to my inmost soul,

and I heard the voice, felt it, and understood it; but my outward ears had nothing to do with it. But what those ears are that hear so plainly when he speaks friendly to the heart, I cannot describe. The eyes of the new man are as wonderful: "The world sees me no more," says Christ, "but ye see me; and because I live ye shall live also." And again: "I will send the Comforter to you, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Moses saw him that is invisible; the patriarchs saw the promise at a distance; "A wise man foresees the evil, and hides himself;" and the saint, in his first love, sees "the King in his beauty, and the land which is very far off." And I have seen my dear Master in open vision for many months together. But what these eyes are is a mystery. Paul says these things are spiritually discerned; and he tells us that the eyes of our understanding are opened; but he doth not explain what those eyes are. I know that faith discovers wonders. But the soul hath more eyes than one. What are the eyes of the understanding? The new man hath got his affections also, which are peculiar to him, the objects of which are, first, God, and his word, and his saints. These affections, love, or charity, are the principal parts of the new man; and, when in exercise, they fill the soul with joy unspeakable and full of

glory. Nor is the new man without his hands. There is a something that holds the beloved fast, and will not let him go. These hands hold fast the faithful word, and every thing that Christ hath given us, that no man take our crown. These hands appear to be the powerful actings of faith, which, under the Spirit's influence and operations, are very powerful. I have often been thinking of the feet of the new man, by which we go in and out and find pasture; yea, God says "They shall mount up as upon eagles' wings, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." I know believing is called a coming to God, and we are said to walk by faith and not by sight; but I think love must have her part in these wonderful journeys of the soul; for faith can neither work nor walk but by love.

Thus I have sent my dear sister a few of my secret thoughts upon these things. But, as Milton says, "I find no end, in wondering mazes lost;" and yet there is a secret pleasure in soaring and diving, though I can neither reach the top nor fathom the bottom.

Whatever name the Lord's elect are called by, the Saviour is generally set forth or represented by something suitable to it. They are debtors, and he, the surety; subjects, and he the king; children, and he the father; lion's whelps, and he the lion; lambs, &c. and he was represented by the ram. A lamb slain from the foundation of the world he is, and that in a two-fold sense:

first, in the purpose of God; and, in the next place, he was typically slain by Abel's sacrifice. It is true he did not suffer in his divine nature; he was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit;" he suffered in the flesh, and bore our sins in his own body upon the tree. Yet, you have no call to wonder at his being typified both by a ram and a lamb, when the scriptures often set him forth both in his senility and in his youth. In the book of Daniel, where he is represented as the judge of quick and dead, the hair of his head is said to be as white as the pure wool; and he is the Ancient of Days; but in the Song of Solomon, where he is described as a wooer, his locks are said to be bushy, and black as a raven.

The best knowledge, and the safest that thou wilt ever attain to respecting the Trinity in this world is, a knowledge of God the Father's love shed abroad in thy heart. This says, "Yea, I have loved thee, and with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." The next is the voice of the blood of sprinkling, which speaks pardon, peace, and reconciliation, which are better things than the blood of Abel. The third is the Spirit's voice, crying, Abba, Father. These are the witnesses of the Trinity; and these three agree in one. The Lord for ever bless thee.

The Desert:

NOCTUA AURITA.

LETTER XLI.

To NOCTUA AURITA, in the Desert.

I EMBRACE this opportunity of sending you a few lines to inform you a little how I go on. When I wrote to you last my soul was melted within me because of trouble; I was fainting in the day of adversity, for my soul was much discouraged because of the way. But the Lord, who comforteth those that are cast down, and who is ever a refuge for the poor and needy, has condescended to appear for me, to raise my hope and expectation, being once more brought to enjoy the presence of him who is all in all to my soul. And I think I do now know something of what the apostle calls "rejoicing in hope;" and this hope I find to be an anchor to my soul, for it does enter into that within the veil. The tempest with which I was tossed has ceased its raging, and a blessed calm is brought to my mind. I am sure Satan himself has felt it; he could not endure it; and unbelief was put to the blush, while faith laid fast hold of his word of promise which was spoken to my soul. How true are the words of the wise man when he says, "As cold water to a thirsty soul,

soul, so is good news from a far country." How a word from God does melt and humble us, and bring us to his feet! And I am sure that nothing else will do it; though in seasons of desertion Satan is as busy with me as ever he can be with any poor soul, to stir up in me hard thoughts of my kind and gracious God and Redeemer. But I find that afterwards these things make deep furrows in my soul, when contrition of heart and godly sorrow operate under the influence of the blessed Spirit. I think I never did before see the distinction so clear between the old man and the new, or what Paul calls flesh and spirit, as I do now. This knowledge I have got in my last conflict, and by experience, which has been truly bitter to my soul; therefore I hope it will abide. My mind seems at present much impressed with a sense of the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord to me. I believe he will not let me run away from him, because, when I am bent on going on in ways that are not good, he lays his rod on me to stop me. How oft has he called back my wandering feet! I may well say, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my days to this present moment;" though Satan has often stirred up such rebellion in my heart that I have even called God's ministers liars when they have prophesied good concerning me. But, notwithstanding this, the Lord has put in my heart some good thing, which will not find satisfaction in any

any thing short of his blessed presence; and, as this is his sweet work, he will accept it. I was long looking for some good thing in myself to recommend me to his favour, instead of receiving all good from him. And, indeed, I find this, that when he withdraws from me, with respect to his sensible presence, and leaves me in the dark, so that I cannot see one step of the path, that then the old legal heaven in my tabernacle will work and ferment to set me to struggle and strive in my own strength. But, when God has appeared for me after such a season, how has my folly been manifested; and I have called myself a thousand fools; and have seen clearly that, if, instead of striving and struggling, I had continued to have entreated the Lord to help and deliver me, I should have been brought out of my difficulties and darkness much sooner. I am sure, from my own experience, that, if God was not to give us something to keep hope and expectation alive, they would soon give up the ghost in such seasons of darkness. But, blessed be his name, he will never forsake his own work. I was sorry to hear you was poorly with a cold. I shall be glad to hear you are better; and I need not say a letter will be very acceptable. You know that I am better in my poor tabernacle than when I wrote last; I think I do begin to see that this late affliction is among the all things that shall work together for my good. I know the Lord has taught

me something by it, and supported me through it, and did keep me when Satan, that old serpent, and his accursed crew, did compass me about like bees, when I was in such a situation that I could neither cry nor call on my God for help. He did then go to the utmost length of his chain, and would, I have no doubt, if he had been permitted, have torn me to pieces, soul and body. What God is like unto our God? O that I could be assured that I should never more entertain one hard thought of him respecting any of his dispensations towards me! But I must conclude, which I do with wishing you prosperity both of soul and body, with much of his presence who is the health of both; and believe me to remain

Your affectionate friend and sister
in the Lord,

The King's Dale.

PHILOMELA.

LETTER

LETTER XLII.

To PHILOMELA, in the King's Dale.

THINE epistle afforded me much joy. "Blessed are they that endure temptation, for when they are tried they shall receive the crown of life," which he hath promised to them that love him. Thou didst say, (O thou of little faith!) "I shall not see him;" yet judgment was before him, and he hath brought thee forth to the light, and thou hast beheld his righteousness. How sweet and endearing are his visits after his long absence! How welcome are his returns after our souls have sat solitary, as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, as a wife of youth refused and deserted! But he soon makes us forget the shame of our youth, and the reproach of our widowhood; and the adversary that saluteth us with a "Where is now thy God?" sees it, and vanishes, inflamed with rage. But he only departs for a season. Nevertheless the armour of God is sufficient to repel the force of all his artillery. God hath planted his fear in our hearts that we may not depart from him. He hath renewed, enlightened, instructed, and influenced our consciences

sciences by his Spirit, that he may check and re-
 proach us for all that is wrong, and approve of all
 that is right ; and we must exercise ourselves day
 and night not to offend him. We are favoured
 with the witness, seal, and first-fruits, of the Spirit,
 and are commanded not to vex or grieve him, lest
 he suspend his freedom, his consolations, and his
 much-needed assistance, in prayer. The Redeemer
 has left us also his last legacy, I mean peace ; and
 we have the promise of the enjoyment of it, unless
 we make to ourselves crooked paths. We have
 the promise of his presence, and of the light of his
 countenance likewise, unless our sins hide his face
 from us, or cause him to return to his place, till
 we acknowledge our offences, and seek him early.
 We have also that faith that is of the operation of
 the Spirit of God ; and nothing can unsettle,
 weaken, damp, or deaden the vigorous actings of
 faith like our misconduct. Besides these things,
 we have the helmet of hope, the shield of faith,
 the breastplate of righteousness, the sword of the
 Spirit, and all sorts of prayer ; and these things
 are more mighty bulwarks against Satan than all
 the fears of death and wrath, yea, than all the
 horrors, terrors, threatenings, and curses, of a
 broken law, which the disciples of Moses pride
 themselves so much upon. Let my dear sister pay
 due attention to these things which accompany
 salvation, and she shall have rejoicing in herself
 alone, and not in another, and shall praise her
 God

God with joyful lips. Moreover, as God hath restored her again to the joys of his salvation, let me admonish her not to act the part of a hawking pedlar, lest they get weary of her; but let her entertain her beloved with praises and thanksgivings, as he entertains her with the discoveries of his love. My kind love to the good man of the house, and tell him I have remembrance of him in my poor prayers. Excuse haste, as I am a servant to many. Dear sister, adieu.

Ever thine in the brotherly covenant,

NOCTUA AURITA.

The Desert.

THE END.

SERIES OF LETTERS

ON

DIVINE SUBJECTS.

By *CHRISTOPHER GOULDING.*



" Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." MATTHEW v. 16.

" Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

MARK viii. 38,

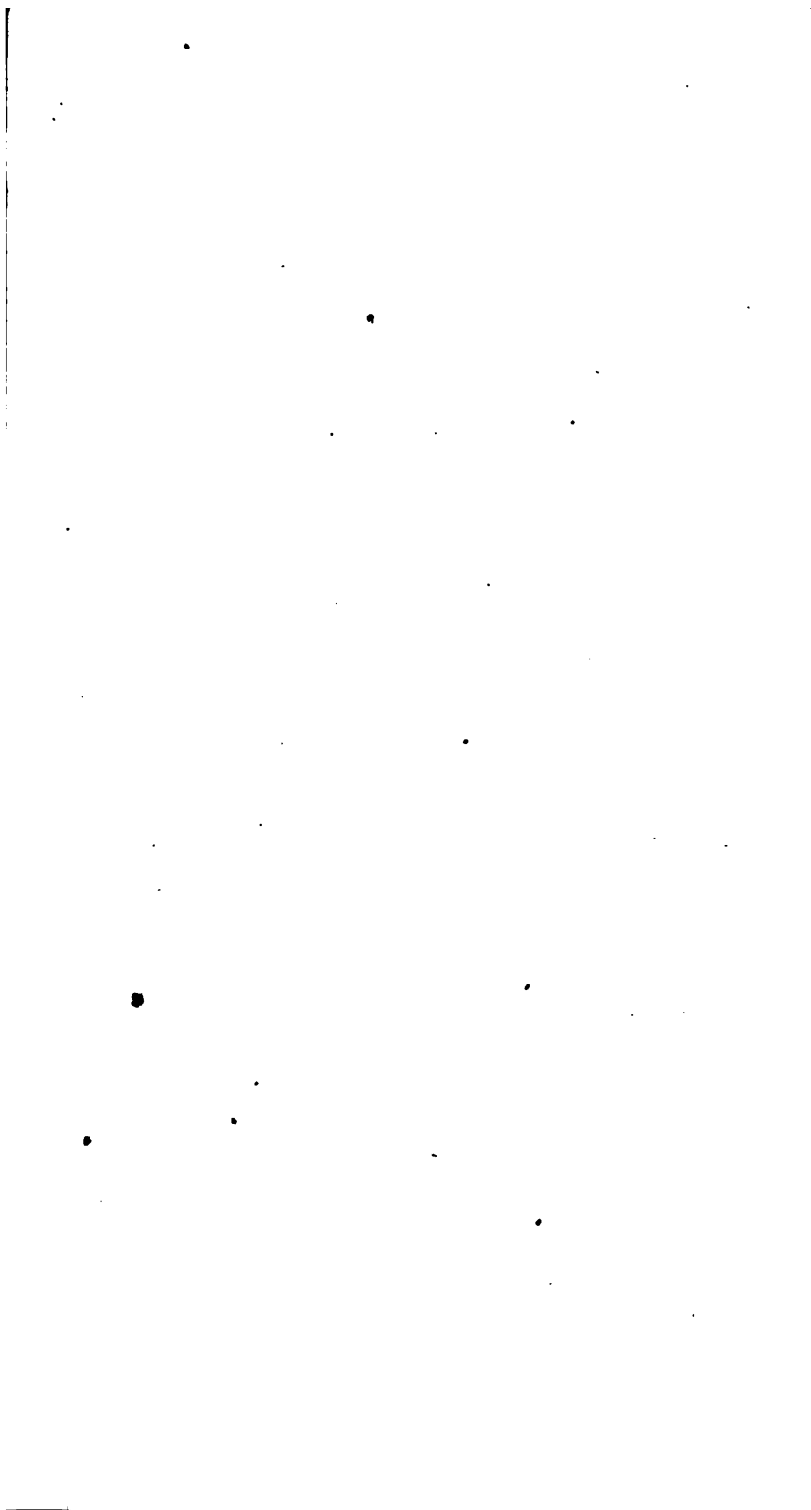
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1814.



INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

*To my beloved Brethren and Friends assembling
at Providence Chapel, Gray's-Inn Lane, and
in sundry other places,*

Wishing you much of the presence of Him, who is the
Lord's saving health among all nations, the chiefest
among ten thousand, whose mouth is most sweet,
yea he is altogether lovely.

WHEN the apostle Paul arrived at Athens, it is said, that "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry," Acts xvii. 16. And so given up to the love of idols were the people, that, lest any one should fail of being respected by them, they dedicated one altar "to the unknown God;" intimating that, if there was any other besides those of whom they had a knowledge, this inscription would include him also. A sight of their superstition and falsehood had such an effect upon the apostle, that "his spirit was stirred:" he felt such a zeal for God, such tenderness and

concern for his honour and cause in the world, that directly he began, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, that spring of living water in his soul, to oppose truth to falsehood, and the true God to idols. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you;" Acts xvii. 23. And he kept on at this good work, in this and other places, with such success, that at Ephesus, it is said, "many that believed came and confessed, and shewed their deeds; many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver," (about fifteen hundred and sixty two pounds ten shillings of our money); "so mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed;" Acts xix. 18—20. And, if every thing that obtains a place in our affections, that opposes Christ, or is contrary to him, that robs him of his glory, and dishonours his blessed name, is a rival, and therefore an idol, as assuredly it is, for a covetous man is called "an idolater," Eph. v. 5; and if every one that trusts in his own righteousness and rejects Christ's, or in any thing of which he is not the sum and substance, are idolaters also, as much so in God's sight as any that bowed the knee to Baal, or kissed the calves that Jeroboam set up at Bethel and Dan; then the number of idols in our days, and their worshippers and admirers, are not far short of those in Paul's time, as may generally be imagined.

The superficial experience and profession of our church state are notorious; and every destructive error that has disgraced the profession of men is to be found amongst us, openly proclaimed and propagated by men of the most bold, hardened, and awfully presumptuous spirits, that is possible I believe for the adversary of souls to furnish them with. And, when those that do know, love, and fear God, are led seriously to consider the present low estate of the church, that it is with us almost as when a standard-bearer fainteth, Isaiah x. 18; the awful departure from the faith of Christ, and the truth as it is in him; there being so few ministers of the Spirit who experimentally preach Christ crucified, called a standard that the Holy Spirit lifts up, or testifies of, in the souls of the saints, when Satan's temptations, evil suggestions, and the heresies of which he is the author come in like a flood, ready to carry all before them, and by which he is put to flight, Isai. lix. 19; so few to exalt the Root of Jesse, which in our nature stands for an ensign of the people, called also the Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch that grew out of his roots, as his human nature did; and to unfold and display the banner of eternal love with all the saving blessings and benefits that attend it, and which are all treasured up in, and communicated from his inexhaustible fulness; to whom all the elect among us Gentiles are to seek, and all such seekers do find his rest to be glorious, Isai. xi. 10, 11; Song ii. 4; Psalm lx. 4;

when there are so few girded with truth as a shield and buckler, to oppose the torrent of false experience and false doctrines, that have almost deluged the land;—I say these considerations, exclusive of a variety more that might be urged, ought to be sufficient to impress the minds of the children of God with a becoming zeal for his honour, his cause, and interest; and, according to their several ability, (and the power, presence, and blessing of God shall ever be found to attend them in their labours) to stand forth to circulate and defend the gospel of Christ to the utmost of their power; “For they that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits,” in the worst of times.

Two passages of scripture enforce, upon all such as are fed with experimental knowledge, and spiritual understanding, what they should attend to; and may the Master of Assemblies fasten them as nails or as goads in all their hearts! First, It is called a strife; “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come to see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;” Phil. i. 27. Intimating, that many heretics and hypocrites will attempt to seduce and draw us away from the truth and simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Secondly, It is compared to a severe contention between two parties, each mustering up all the strength that he is in possession of; something similar to that

we read of between the devil and Michael, (not the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called in Dan. xii. 1. "Michael, the great Prince,") but a created angel, who contended and disputed about the body of Moses, Jude 9. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." And the reason assigned for such a necessity follows thus; "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," (such are real Antinomians) "and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ;" Jude 3, 4. These include Arians, and all others who make the Saviour a mere man or creature: and such must be earnestly contended with, for we must not "give place to them by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel may continue with us;" Gal. ii. 5. And, as an encouragement in this work, the Lord is pleased to give us a gracious and precious promise, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist," Luke xxi. 15. See it fulfilled in Stephen's experience, Acts vi. 10. If ever the circumstances that Paul describes corresponded to any time, it is the present, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts

shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. This is evidently the case with us now; sound doctrines and sound experience are scarcely to be found among the professors of our day; who, according to their own lusts, heap to themselves (for the Lord hath no hand in the collection of these heaps) teachers, having itching ears; and the ears of these are turned away from the truth, and are turned unto fables. Paul prophesied that plenty of impostors would appear among the churches he had planted, after his departure: and our late faithful Pastor often warned us, that such would succeed his removal. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one day and night with tears;" Acts xx. 29—31.

Under a clear view, and the full assurance of faith, that the church of Christ in our time is going into a very dark night, the shadows of the evening being already much upon her, and hoping that, by the blessing of God, some weak hands may be lifted up, and feeble knees strengthened, I have determined to pay you another visit from the press; offering you a part of my testimony for

the Lord, by publishing some letters to a friend with whom I was brought acquainted in rather a singular manner, which I considered as a truly kind providence, it having been the means of establishing my mind more firmly in the belief of this precious truth—That the Lord worketh all things in this world after the counsel of his own will;—that no individual motion or circumstance ever takes place in time, but what is according to the decree and purpose of God from everlasting, as the scriptures abundantly declare. “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;” Acts xvii. 26. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father—But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows;” Matt. x. 29—31. “There shall not a hair of your head perish;” Luke xii. 25. If then not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a hair of our heads, without our heavenly Father’s leave, much more is that benefit, that one saint often receives by the instrumentality of another, according to the Lord’s eternal purpose and particular appointment; and indeed every thing is the subject of the special providence of God.—The king of Babylon was brought to confess this after living seven years as a beast, and being then restored to his faculties and kingdom; “I blessed the most

High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Daniel iv. 34, 35. Nothing comes to pass but by the particular appointment and ordination of God. And what one of our good old Bishops said upon this subject, I consider so truly precious, that I cannot pass it without insertion.

"A sparrow, whose price is but mean, two of them valued at a farthing, which some make to be the tenth part of a Roman penny, and was certainly one of their least coins; whose life therefore is but contemptible, and whose flight seems but giddy and at random; yet it falls not to the ground, neither lights any where, without your Father. His all-wise providence hath before appointed what bough it shall pitch on, what grains it shall pick up, where it shall lodge, and where it shall build; on what it shall live, and when it shall die.—And, if your Father's providence be so critical about the small concerns even of sparrows, fear not ye, for you are of more value than many sparrows; yea, of more value than many men.—Our Saviour adds, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." God keeps an account even of that stringy excrement; he knows how many

fall off, and the precise number that remain.—Hence we learn that God governs the meanest, the most inconsiderable and contemptible occurrences in the world, by an exact and particular providence.—Do you see a thousand little atoms wandering up and down in a sunbeam? It is God that so peoples it, and he guides their innumerable and irregular strayings. Not a dust flies in a beaten road, but God raiseth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and by his particular care conveys it to the certain place he had before appointed for it; nor shall the most fierce and tempestuous wind hurry it any further. And, if God's care and providence reach thus to those minute things which are but as it were the circumstances of nature, and little accessaries to the world, certainly man, who is the head and lord of it, for whose sake and service other creatures were formed, may very well be confident that God exerciseth an especial and most accurate providence over him and all his affairs. Again—Each fly and worm, as well as man (who is but the greater worm of the two,) hath a work to do in the world, and till that be finished God sustains its being; nor shall the weakest creature be destroyed within the prefixed time that God hath set for its duration.—Now, by this almighty providence God overrules and sways all things to his own glory. There is nothing comes to pass but God hath his ends in it, and will certainly make his own ends out of it. Though the world seems to run at random, and

affairs mix together in blind confusion and rude disorder, yet God sees and knows the concatenation of all causes and effects; and so governs them, that he makes a perfect harmony out of all these seeming jarrings and discords.—The proceedings in divine providence are all regular and orderly to his own ends, in all the thwartings and contrarities of second causes.—Once more: with respect to God there is nothing casual or contingent in the world: a thing may be casual in respect of particular causes; but, in respect of the universal or first cause, nothing is so.—If a master send a servant to a certain place, and command him to stay there till such a time, and presently after should send another servant to the same, the meeting of these two is wholly casual in respect of themselves, but ordained and foreseen by the master who sent them. So it is in all fortuitous events here below; they fall out unexpectedly to us, but not so as to God, for he sees and he appoints all the vicissitudes of things.”

With this soul-establishing doctrine dwelling in my reader's mind, and I hope richly in his faith and affections also, I shall proceed to give him the narrative of my becoming acquainted with the person who was the occasion of the following letters.—After having been in London about eight years, I purposed visiting my native country and my father's house, at Lazonby in Cumberland. A young man who resided in the city, and with whom I became acquainted from the circumstance

of his attending the ministry of our late honoured Pastor, understanding that I had an intention of visiting the North, committed to my care some letters for his father; which my reader will bear in mind, as the first link of that chain of circumstances that connected me with Mr. S——n.

I left London July 27, 1800, on board the *Britannia* for Leith, where I arrived in safety, after a prosperous voyage, by the will of God, in seven days; from Edinburgh I went to Glasgow, and from thence to Carlisle. Upon my arrival I delivered the letters that were intrusted to my care; but upon calling I did not make myself known. The same day I arrived at my father's house at Lazonby, about fourteen miles from Carlisle. On Friday, August 15, a relation of mine, a professor of religion, called upon me with a message from the young man's father, that he would be at Mr. S——n's, at F——, in the afternoon, and wished to see me. I at first objected, but afterwards followed, and overtook my cousin, when we both went to Mr. S——n's, about four miles from Lazonby. Upon our arrival at his homely cottage we were received in a very kind and friendly manner, but the young man's father was not come. To my surprise I met there two ministers; one of whom I knew, but the other was a stranger, who was appointed to preach in Mr. S——n's house.—Being there some considerable time before service began, we drank tea, and very shortly, in conversation, Mr. Huntington's name

was introduced, probably on purpose, it being known that I was one of his people. Our party, if I recollect right, consisted of about eight persons; and the conversation turned upon the moral law being the believer's only rule of life; which I opposed to the best of my ability, proving it to be the servant's rule, not the son's. During this dispute, which was principally kept up between the two ministers and myself, I observed Mr. S—n, who sat upon a stool at the side of the fire-place, without his coat, just as he came out of the harvest field, with his elbows upon his knees, and his head between his hands; and I believe he never once spoke or looked up, but was all ear, while we were all tongue.

Within about half an hour of the time of service we all retired, except the stranger, who was to preach, and walked together into the corn field adjoining the house.—I found my heart a little warm with love and zeal for God's honour and truth, and my mouth in some measure opened, and therefore continued in conversation about different things in religion; all which time Mr. S—n kept close by me, and several times I well remember that he made remarks, expressing his approbation at what was spoken, and never left me a moment. We returned to the house, and heard a discourse from these words, "Christ died for the ungodly." After service, when it was quite dark, we departed for our different homes; and, just as I had left Mr. S—n's, came the gentleman

to whom I had brought the letters, who walked a few hundred yards with me, and all he had to say was simply to remember him to his son. So that I perceived God sent me to meet Mr. S—n, rather than that gentleman. I left Mr. S—n two books, "Toplady on Predestination," and Mr. Huntington's Sermon, called "The Funeral of Arminianism."

After my return to London, sending some copies of Mr. Huntington's "Loss and Restoration of the Image of God in Man," I enclosed one for Mr. S—n, with a note, thanking him for his civility and attention to me, a stranger, while at his house; and in return I received a letter from him, giving me an account of his experience, and requesting my opinion respecting it. Upon reading it over, I found some particular impressions upon my mind, which led me to be perfectly satisfied that there was a great deal kept back, and that his experience corresponded very much with my own. Under this impression I wrote him the first letter, in a very pointed manner asking a number of questions, and appealing to God and conscience that he would say nothing but what they could put their amen to. This led to his second letter, which brought all his experience forth, as I have related in my answer to it.—He was wrought upon, both wounded and healed, in private; for there were no means of God's appointment that he could find, though he searched after them with diligence, as we see by his going forty miles on

foot to hear a Calvinist minister, and remaining with him two days; though neither by preaching nor conversation could he describe his case.—He experienced the truth of what the Lord says to all under such circumstances; “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them;” Isai. xli. 17.—“For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever;” Psalm ix. 18.—“He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper; he shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy; he shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight;” Psalm lxxii. 12—14. Compare also Psalm xii. 5.

After the Lord was pleased to work out his happy deliverance, as related in the second letter, and had for a very unusual period indulged him with comforts and consolations, then the adversary was permitted to tempt and harass him by his evil suggestions, and was allowed so to foil and bewilder him for the trial of his faith, hope, and love, that when I was brought into his company he was just ready, in his own apprehensions, to cast away his confidence; to write such bitter things against himself, as to think all his former experience a delusion, and that he was deceived, and had committed the unpardonable sin. Here

he was when he sat upon the stool by the fire-side, as already mentioned, and the good Lord was pleased so to bless what he enabled me to say to him, that confusion vanished, infidelity fled, his bonds and fetters gave way, his doubts and fears were dispersed; Christ shewed him that he was still upon his own beast, where he set him when he first bound up his wounds, poured in oil and wine, and brought him health and cure; and he sensibly and comfortably kept riding on towards the heavenly country, whither I believe in my soul he is arrived in perfect safety.—“ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits !”

I must here inform you of the wonderful impression upon his mind, and what was spoken to his heart, just after I entered his house, which he told me in his third letter. His words are these: “ When the Lord sent you to my house, soon after I saw you, a thought sprung up in my mind, just as if the Lord had said, ‘ You want to be tried by my word; you must tell your case and experience to that man, and I will enable him to give you an answer;’ which has proved to be exactly agreeable to the working of my thoughts at that time, and the Lord has appeared for me again; the Sun of Righteousness has arisen afresh with healing in his wings, and enlarged my heart. My thoughts go out after him; I have access to him in prayer, and can now rejoice in his finished salvation; and I sincerely thank the Father of all

mercies for enabling you to write so exactly to my case, and next to God I thank you, and can with gratitude of heart say, that your prayer has been answered, your epistle proving a word in due season; for by the blessing of God upon it my soul has been revived and restored again, and I believe that I shall be more than conqueror, through him that hath loved me." He also declares, that he never was at liberty to tell his experience to any person but myself. Hence the church is declared to be, "A spring shut up, a fountain sealed," which is only opened and enlarged as the Lord is pleased to influence her by his grace and Spirit. The kind providence that brought us together, which I believe, by the blessing of God, has been profitable to both our souls, served also as the means of circulating our late honoured Pastor's works in that part of the country; and I am in possession of some good reports that they have been made very useful to several; especially to two men, with whom I keep up a correspondence.

How does the great and good Shepherd, who was sent to save all the lost sheep, both elect Jews and Gentiles, go after these, and by his own means, and the display of his own power, seek them out of all places whither scattered in the cloudy and dark day, bringing them into union with himself! So that they must and shall, let them be in what corners they may, see out of obscurity and out of darkness, and so come

forth as to shew themselves by a public profession of his blessed name; as the Lord says, "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family (or tribe), and I will bring you to Zion," Jer. iii. 14,—the remnant according to the election of grace, in this our highly-favoured isle, which is now the seat of the church of God, and to which the prophet alludes so beautifully, that I do not like to pass it by without notice, "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law," Isai. xlii. 4. The islands of the Gentiles were overspread, or first peopled, by our father Japhet, Gen. x. 5. And the promise of the Lord to him is, "God shall enlarge, or persuade Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," Gen. ix. 27. And this was fulfilled when the Jews were broken off; the door of faith opened to the Gentiles, Acts xiv. 27; and they were brought to believe in Christ Jesus. And this faith is the law the isles were to wait for, including our island more than any other; for we are living witnesses that we have not waited in vain, because the Lord has given us that faith which is the fruit of the Spirit, and the hand that has brought salvation to our souls. And then, if we follow on to the tenth verse, this faith, which purifies the heart, and works by love, brings that comfort which makes the soul joyful in its God; and such are called upon to sing his praises; "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the ends of

the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein, the isles and the inhabitants thereof; let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands," Isai. xlii. 4—12. Also, "Listen, O Isles, unto me," Isai. xlix. 1. And, bless his holy name! how many in this isle have been brought to sit down at his feet, and to receive the word of eternal life from his mouth, according to these passages, Deut. xxxiii. 3. John x. 3, 4, 16. Compare Isai. lix. 18; li. 5; and lx. 9. Again, "From the uttermost parts of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous; but I said, My leanness, my leanness, wo unto me!" Isai. xxiv. 16. And when the Lord Jesus girded his sword upon his thigh, Psalm xlv. 3, and upon his white horse, Rev. xix. 11, began to ride in this island, and to display his power, his glory and majesty, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness, that these, by the means of his ministering servants, in whose hearts he dwells and by whom he speaks, might be dispensed to the objects of his eternal affection, which after his resurrection was promised, and the commission was given, "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark xiii. 10. xvi. 15. When those that escaped at the destruction of Jerusalem, that drew the bow or preached the word of God from a saving knowledge of the blessings of it, which were the Apostles, and others their fellow labourers, who, with their successors, were scattered abroad, so as

to go to the nations—to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud; to Tubal and Javan, and at last to the isles afar off, that had not heard of Christ's fame, neither seen his glory; to declare all this among the Gentiles, as it has been done to us Britons, *Isai. lxi. 19*;—then began to be accomplished the truth of this gracious promise, which contains all the elect in this part of the earth; “I will say to the north, Give up,” as well as to the East, West, and South, “Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;” (we Britons are a part of the ends of the earth) “even every one that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him,” *Isai. xliii. 6, 7*.

Here we plainly see that the Lord's elect are declared to be his sons and daughters before called by grace, or made partakers of the Holy Ghost; and they were such by election and predestination, in the counsel of peace and covenant of grace, entered into from all eternity by the three adorable persons in the ever-blessed Trinity. And a parallel we have in their being called sons of peace before ever peace was applied or communicated;” *Luke x. v. 6*. And the Holy Spirit is not given to make us sons and daughters; but to enable us to claim that, with application to ourselves, which we were from everlasting, and to make it manifest to us that we are the children of God, according to his eternal purpose: and so it is clearly declared

by Paul;—consider well the passage; “But, when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and, because ye are sons,” (such before ever the Spirit is given, mind,) “God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, *Abbà, Father.*” And, when the Spirit of adoption is received, and we are brought to claim in time what we were from everlasting, then we are called, furnished, and enabled to do so, and to live as children; “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ,” Gal. iv. 4, 7. What a number of sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty have been called forth, raised up, and appeared as the peculiar treasure of the Lord, in this our isle!

This prophet further sees, in vision, all the wonderful victories and triumphs over the powers of hell that the British martyrs have obtained, and would again obtain, if called to pass through the flames to everlasting glory. Hear him describe them: “They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord,” (that which attends his supporting power, and sensible soul-satisfying presence,) “they shall cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.” Isai. xxiv. 14, 15. This includes very particularly, and perhaps more

than any other, the island of Britain. That the Lord God of Israel was glorified by numbers of his saints, even in the fires, in this island, Smithfield, Bow, Canterbury, Oxford, Hadley, Carmarthen,* and a variety of other places, both in

* Such a singular display of the promised power of God was manifested in the experience of Doctor Robert Farrer, lord bishop of St. David's, who was burned in the market-place at Carmarthen, March 30, 1555, that I could not pass it without insertion. "A Mr. Jones coming to condole him on the painfulness of the death he was to undergo, the holy bishop made answer, 'If you see me once stir while I am burning, then give no credit to the truth of the doctrines for which I suffer.' God, under whose inspiration undoubtedly this was uttered, enabled his faithful martyr to make good his promise, for he stood like a rock in the midst of the waves, without flinching or moving so much as once; steadily holding up his arms, even when his hands were burnt away; till one Richard Gravel, a bye-stander, dashed him on the head with a staff, and so struck him down."

You have another remarkable instance in the case of Mr. Thomas Hawkes, a gentleman of Essex, who was burned at Coggeshall, June 10, 1555. "A little before his execution several of his particular friends, who, though steadfast Protestants, were in some degree of bondage through fear of that violent death, which they knew not how soon they might be called to undergo, requested him, that if the pain of burning was at all tolerable, he would give them a signal before he expired. The good man promised them that he would: and the token fixed upon was, that he should elevate his hands above his head towards heaven ere his soul ascended to God. Being fastened to the stake, the faggots were kindled; in which, when he had continued long, and when his speech was taken away by the violence of the flame, his skin shrivelled, and his fingers consumed, so that all thought certainly he had been gone; suddenly, and contrary to all expectation, the blessed servant of God, being mindful of his promise afore made,

England and Wales, do abundantly confirm, as recorded in the Book of Martyrs : and I doubt not but he will be further glorified, if hereafter any of his family should be called thus to finish their race. Peter is declared to glorify God in suffering martyrdom, John xxi. 18, 19. And so will all that are called to do the same, for they shall be more than conquerors through Christ that hath loved them. And this, like every other promise of the Lord, must and shall stand fast ; “ Behold, I give you,” (and it belongs to every heir of promise, down to the end of time, as well as them,) “ power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy ; and nothing shall by any means hurt you,” Luke x. 19. When it is said—nothing shall by any means hurt the saints—it signifies not their bodies, nor that they shall escape trouble or distress of soul ; but that nothing shall by any means destroy their souls.—After so long a digression, which however I hope will not prove unacceptable to the reader, I must return to my subject.

Every instrument has the work, which he has to do in Mercy’s building, appointed and proportioned for him by the Lord. Thus Philip was

lifted up his hands (which were all in a blaze) over his head, and triumphantly struck them together thrice. At the sight of which the spectators, those especially who were apprised of the signal, gave uncommon shouts of applause. And so the blessed martyr of Christ, straightway sinking down into the fire, yielded up his Spirit.”

ordained to preach Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch; Paul to the poor gaoler at Philippi in Macedonia; to the much people the Lord had at Corinth; as also many others. Peter must go from Joppa to Cornelius, and preach Christ to him and all in his house, that salvation might be enjoyed by them. Our blessed Saviour himself, as his Father's honoured servant, must needs go through Samaria, to save the poor woman at the well, and gather those Samaritans that were white already to harvest; cross the sea of Tiberias, to dispossess the legion of devils from the mad Gaderene, that he might be clothed and set down at his feet in his right mind. He passed through Jericho, that Zaccheus might know for himself the salvation of the Lord. In all which he was doing the will of his Father that sent him, and these were portions of that work that he was appointed to finish. And so to this day all the members of the mystical body of Christ are useful in their place, and have each an appointed measure of work to accomplish, as Paul beautifully sets forth in the twelfth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians.

I consider the concurrence of circumstances that brought me acquainted with Mr. S—n as a full confirmation that, with respect to the Lord, there is no such thing as chance or accident, but every thing is absolutely preordained, irrevocably decreed, immutably fixed, and therefore infallibly certain to take place in time, without the

possibility of miscarriage; for what infinite Wisdom has planned is an absolutely perfect design, which Almighty power effects or accomplishes without the possibility of a single failure. And it is worthy of remark, that those very persons, who were the means of my becoming acquainted with Mr. S—n, have apostatized from their profession of the truth, after having performed the work appointed them to do in that respect, as Judas did at the head of the multitude that went to apprehend the Saviour; for he was guide to them that took Jesus; and, when he had performed that work, then he went to his own place, Luke xxii. 27, and Acts i. 16.

I paid my friend two visits in the North after our correspondence commenced; and found him a very unctuous, experimental soul. I loved him dearly for Christ and truth's sake. He left this world very suddenly; being well, ill, and dead (or rather asleep in Jesus) in about four days; but in the enjoyment of a solid peace, a living faith, and a joyful hope of the glory of God; as his widow's letter to me will shew; which, with my answer, finishes the intended publication. If, however, these letters should meet with your approbation, by the Lord's blessing in any measure attending the perusal of them, having many more in manuscript to other friends, I may probably be induced to publish some of them. I am well aware that my plainness of speech will give offence to many; but if, while I pass through evil

report from some, the good Lord does but favour me with a good report from others who love and fear him in sincerity and truth, arising from his making them profitable to their souls, I shall be satisfied; for I had much rather have the reproaches and curses of an empty, hypocritical professor, than his deceitful compliments or blessings; as David says, "Let them curse, but bless thou; and when they arise (to do this) let them be ashamed, but let thy servant rejoice," Psalm cviii. 28.

These letters having been written without any view to publication, you will probably find much tautology and many imperfections in them; which however must remain, for I cannot find time to correct them, as I might have done had they been transcribed. But, should my reader find the matter sound, and to agree with his experience, and the Lord's presence and approbation with him as he proceeds, I am sure he will from his heart pardon and overlook any deficiencies or inaccuracies arising either from mistake or inability in the author, who makes no pretensions to a capacity for writing either an elegant performance, or a learned composition. In addition to the corruption of the present times, the consideration of the Lord's having blessed them to the profit of his soul to whom they were addressed, as also to some others who have since perused them, at the earnest solicitation of several friends, and in the hope that they may be still further useful to some

of the Lord's family, I have been induced at length to publish the two first. And, as it is deemed advisable to bring them out in numbers; should this first be acceptable, and meet with due encouragement, the rest shall be continued in succession, as it may please God to permit. And, that the reader may be apprised of the various subjects treated of, I herè state the contents of those that follow:—

Letter III. The Spirit's work upon the heart; meaning of rivers and waters in Scripture, and those in the 27th of Ezekiel explained; Use of the law, &c.

IV. On Divine teaching.

V. Principally upon Ezekiel xvi. 4—14. The fallen state of mankind by nature, and his recovery solely by grace.

VI. On the nature of apostacy.

VII. Upon my sending Mr. S—n some books.

VIII. Copy of two letters; one from Mr. L—s to me, and my answer; both sent to Mr. S—n. Principally upon Antichrist.

IX. Short remarks upon true and false faith; also a parallel between the church of God and the Garden of Eden noticed.

X. Who are proper, and who are improper guests at the sacrament. Remarks respecting true and false ministers, and the work of each.

XI. Principally upon the fundamental truths of the Gospel.

XII. What means the Lord uses to take away hypocrites from his church, Hebrews vi. 4—6; largely explained.

XIII. Upon the parable, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves," &c. Luke x. 30—35.

XIV. On opposing the workings of unbelief, and holding forth encouragement to such, as revealed in the word of God.

XV. Mrs. S—n's letter to me upon her husband's death.

XVI. My answer to Mrs. S—n's letter.

I must yet trespass a little longer upon your kind indulgence, before I conclude this present address.

My last publication, as I naturally expected, has passed through both evil and good report.—One person has been pleased to vilify me not a little; whom I consider to be the quintessence of hardness, blindness, and awful presumption, and the most daring impostor that ever disgraced a profession of religion; and who, in traducing me, has in one instance (by a necessary consequence) done nothing less than blaspheme the Holy Ghost; so that I cannot but esteem his slander as a real honour; and shall never, I hope, disgrace myself by taking any further notice of one so truly despicable.

Another has been pleased to present me with a Christmas-box, a pamphlet valued at fifteen

pence; and I am very glad it cost me nothing. The author deals with me in a double capacity; he first pays me some handsome compliments, and then proceeds to chastise me as handsomely for what he considers confusion and error. Till now I did not view myself a man of so much consequence as to be deserving the notice of such wise and learned men. The author seems to be conscious that he has espoused a bad or a desperate cause, or he would not surely have secreted himself altogether in fiction. The fictitious initials of Y. Z. and place of residence, "From the Wilderness and Solitary way," indicate that he is ashamed publicly to appear at the head of his production. Had he acted the honest and honourable part, he would have given both his real name and place of residence, as I was not ashamed to set him the example; and I call upon him for this, as a nameless author deserves no notice. Besides, I feel a great aversion to disgrace my profession by fighting an adversary in the dark; as at present I can but consider him as a pretended friend at best; and, whatever absurdities I have been guilty of, or whatever erroneous views I may have taken, according to his ideas, he is perhaps the last man that ought to have sat in judgment upon me; for where he thinks he fixes one absurdity or error upon me, I consider him the author of ten, upon the most moderate calculation. And I will insist upon this, that his views of Popery, and the present state of the church and of the world, he never

had from the Spirit of the Lord, who leads into all truth, not into confusion ; and where he does not operate as the spirit of revelation and understanding, such must and shall remain in gross darkness, relative to the times in which we live, the mystery of the kingdom of God, or the spiritual meaning of the word of God. The scriptures with him serve only as a nose of wax, to wrest as best suits his purpose, which is awful to observe in several places of his letter ; and he mostly makes them subservient to history, not history subservient to them. He does not establish any thing firmly, with a " thus saith the Lord ;" but Rapin and others say so and so. " To the law and to the testimony ; If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isai. viii. 20.

He is honest enough to acknowledge and confess his ignorance in divine things, and yet can point out the rock that myself and many more have split upon, and the foundation of all our misconceptions ; and has taken upon himself to teach and instruct us in that which has been beyond the experience of every one (a late friend of his excepted,) till his time, and that which is the most mysterious and difficult in all the word of God.—Hear his own words, " There is one reason against these things that to me is unanswerable, and it is the only one that I know of that is so. It is a personal one ; for certainly I am the last person upon earth likely to know any thing of di-

vine subjects;" (mark that!) "much less one so deep and mysterious, that has confounded the wise and learned, and left them in great uncertainty." Then why meddle with what you have no understanding in? "This argument to me is incontrovertible, it is every thing but an absolute impossibility."

Observe what he says in another place: "The book of Revelation, and the prophecy of Daniel, being very deep and mysterious, which ignorant and illiterate persons, like myself, hardly ever meddled with, that did not come to a mad-house; let us refer to other scriptures, where these things are spoken of in much plainer terms."

Reader, what do you think of such a teacher as this? Any part of divine revelation the high road to a mad-house? when "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; and the Lord is pleased to pronounce a blessing upon such as read the Revelation, (chap. i. 3;) and exhorts us to search the scriptures, of which Daniel and the Revelation form an important part; declaring that, by his blessing attending this diligence, they shall be "a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path," by which we are to cleanse our way by taking heed thereto? Read John v. 39; Psalm cxix. 115; cxix. 9. And could it have been supposed

before this, that any one would voluntarily enter that path, which, next to an absolute certainty, leads the traveller to a mad-house? which, by meddling with Daniel and Revelation, proves to be the case with this gentleman. And for an ignorant and illiterate man to set himself up as a teacher and expositor of the very things of which he confesses he has no knowledge, is utter confusion, and irreconcilable to every faculty that constitutes a person *compos mentis*.

Again, (page 63) he says, "Better things are far beyond my reach." Then it is a pity he should meddle with sacred things at all; and it would have been wisdom to have held his peace, if what the wise man says is to be depended upon, Prov. xvii. 28. In page 4 he tells us that last year he was favoured with "a little of the comforts of hope," the utmost stage he has attained to. I must give him credit for this, as it really staggers my confidence fully to believe it; and my reason for so speaking arises from my own experience; for when I was favoured with a good hope of salvation, that salvation hoped for was so continually uppermost with me as the one thing needful, that I could find time little enough to search after the experience of it in a diligent use of the means of God's appointment; and I had such a sense of my own blindness and ignorance, that I was really that fool whom the Lord promises to make wise to salvation; "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become

a fool that he may be wise," 1 Cor. iii. 18. Private confession of my sin, under a deep sense of my lost estate; private prayer to God for mercy; searching the scriptures; and watching and waiting at Wisdom's gates, and at the posts of her doors to hear the word preached; so fully occupied all my leisure hours, that I was the last person in the world qualified, or who could find time, to commence author upon any subject, much less to engage as a controversial writer, and that upon the most difficult of all the subjects revealed in the word of God.

Reader, be upon your guard if you peruse Y. Z.'s letter to me, as it means a great deal more than is plainly spoken. It first gives thee a high testimony of the late Mr. Huntington, which is only a bait to prepare thee to swallow a second course, when you have the worst of confusion respecting Popery, the times we live in, and the state of the church in our day, in all which he contradicts the word of God, as I hope I shall never be at a loss to prove; "Though he speak fair, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart," Prov. xxvi. 25. Although wrapt up in a deal of art and cunning, there are several bitter reflections cast upon our late departed friend, which prove the writer guilty, if not of hypocrisy, at least of unpardonable neglect; for, if he saw Mr. H. in such error and falsehood as he insinuates, why did he not, during his lifetime, seeing he professes (and it is nothing more

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read the letters here submitted to your notice, you will go to the Lord by prayer, to ask wisdom of him rightly to understand them; and that, so far as is consistent with his mind and will, he may be pleased to own and bless them to your profit; seeing he has promised that he will give testimony to the word of his grace, but nothing less. With this request, and an anxious wish that you will attend to it, and with my poor but sincere prayers for your prosperity, for the present I shall bid you farewell; but believe me, Brethren, to remain, so far as blessed with ability, your willing servant,

For Christ's and truth's sake,

C. G.

No. 4, Northampton Square,
February 1614.

LETTERS,

LETTER I.

London, April 25, 1801.

To my good Friend Gaius, peace be multiplied.
Amen.

I RECEIVED your unexpected, but particularly welcome epistle, which I have now before me; and have reason to bless God that he should cause you to open your heart so freely to me, who never saw you but once. I have known some in a very flaming profession, to whom I never could open my mind respecting my experience; so true is that saying of the church, where she is called "A spring shut up, a fountain sealed;" by which we may well understand, that God will not always suffer his children to open their experience to hypocrites, as such cannot understand one branch of it, because they are destitute of the Holy Ghost, who alone can lead the soul into all truth, and is a Spirit of judgment to all his people, when they sit in judgment, as well as of strength

to those who turn the battle to the gate. The unction from the Holy One must be received as God's free gift, in and from Christ's fulness, or else we shall for ever live with the vail upon our souls, and never know any thing of that kingdom in the heart, which stands in power, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and without it Christ cannot be formed in the heart the hope of glory, neither can we ever experience a new birth; and, "Except a man be born again, he cannot either see, or enter the kingdom of God;" Christ positively declaring of all that shall be heirs of glory, "Ye must be born again."

I have no doubt, from what I perceived when in company with you, and what I have now before me, I am writing to an honest-hearted person, who desires by all means to come to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, whether they are or are not wrought in God. I think I may rely upon this in the full assurance of faith; and if so, then Christ speaks much to the comfort of such when he says, "He that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God," John iii. 21. But of others; "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd," John iii. 19, 20. An honest heart is God's gift I am sure; and the language of

such a one we have thus; "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24. Now, when God is pleased by his holy Spirit to convince a sinner effectually of sin, and shew him what he really is, which he does by sending the law home to his conscience, and shining into his heart with it; for the law is not sufficient to convince a man of sin, nor shew him his sin, unless the blessed Spirit quicken his dead soul, and give him light to see, as we read, "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light," Ephes. v. 13. Proverbs xx. 27;—I say, when God does this, and we are brought to see and feel what we really are, then, but never till then, we find an honest heart, and a coming to the light, to know the worst of ourselves. Nothing but spiritual convictions for sin will do this: legal convictions, attended with the lashes of a man's natural conscience, will not do, for they will always make a man shun the light, and flee from God.

But before I come to any particular reply respecting your letter, I will thank you more largely to answer a few particulars in mine; and I am persuaded that you will declare nothing but to what both God and conscience will put their amen; for, if men are deceived by us, God cannot, who will bring every work into judgment,

and will make every hidden thing manifest; "All things being naked and open before him with whom we have to do." I love plain dealing, and believe you do the same; and therefore in this confidence I am minded to notice a few particulars. First, Will you give me an account of the time when, and by what means, you were first wounded; whether by the word preached, or how? Secondly, "How long you might labour in your own strength to obey the moral law, to satisfy its demands; and how you were brought to give up all hopes of ever obtaining the favour of God that way? Thirdly, When you were driven out of all confidence in the flesh, how were you brought to resignation to the sovereign will of God, and to justify him in sending you to hell? Or whether you were ever brought down sensibly to confess your sin, and to declare to God himself that you deserved ten thousand times more than you either felt or feared, and that he would be strictly just and righteous in your destruction? Fourthly, When you were brought to see and feel yourself a sinner, and to despair of any way or means of salvation, by or from yourself; how was the door of hope opened? How were you raised to have any expectation that such a sinner as you could be saved, and yet a holy, just, and righteous God appear true to his law, his threatenings, and his justice, seeing he declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die?" Fifthly, If this was ever made plain and clear to you, how were you brought to believe

that you were an object of God's love; and when his love was shed abroad in your heart, what was the effect of it, respecting both God and yourself? How did God appear to you then, and how did you appear in your own eyes? Sixthly, Tell me how long it was that you ceased to read the scriptures? Seventhly, As it is declared, that without repentance all must perish, will you say how God was pleased to give it you, seeing Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, as well as the forgiveness of their sins? Eighthly, How long might your comforts and consolations last before they were withdrawn, and you got from the sensible enjoyment of them? Ninthly, If you found unbelief-work, what was it that you could not believe? Tenthly, Will you tell me how you became acquainted with Mr. Huntington? Eleventhly, You say you found all your wants wonderfully supplied; tell me what those wants were, and where you got a supply for them? Twelfthly, And, if you felt your sins a burden, how, and by what means did you get rid of them? I should be glad to have your answers to these few questions, and particularly how you were first raised to hope, and to expect salvation, and what your expectation could be founded upon? I beg you will be as particular as you can, for I long to hear; and when you are pleased thus to favour me, as God shall enable me, I will more particularly reply to what you desire, and compare notes with you.

Conversion work, my good friend, is little known in our days; it is entirely God's work upon the heart, and makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, forming us a people for himself, that we may shew forth his praise; changing a vessel of wrath into a vessel of mercy; and not only casting the devil out of our hearts, and destroying his works; but it comprehends also Christ's taking possession of them by his Spirit, and setting up and establishing his kingdom there, which is a kingdom of grace, that shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life; so that neither the corruption of our hearts, nor the temptations of the devil, shall ever be permitted to prove our ruin. And O, what a strong consolation is this to every heir of promise, to every one of Christ's sheep! But that, which is generally called conversion in our days, differs much from the Bible account of it.—Did you ever read, in the word of God, that Satan is divided against himself? I trow not. But would it not be so if he was to tell a person that he was a hypocrite, that his religion was superficial, and that he had neither part nor lot in the matter? It would seem so according to reason, setting aside divine revelation, I think. The wisest step he could take, I should suppose, would be to tell such a one how great a saint he was, and what a favourite of heaven; how sure of that glory that is to be revealed. In this way he would act becoming himself, and bid fair to keep a person in carnal security and false peace, and so lead

him quietly on the broad way into destruction : while the other manner of working would be the very means to lead him to self-examination and calling upon God, which is the only way to get deliverance from his power ; and in this manner his kingdom would be brought to desolation.— But, let him act whichever way he will, he proves God's account to be true, namely, that “ he is a liar ;” for, if he tempt the saint to believe that he is a hypocrite, or a sinner to believe himself a saint, in either case it is a lie ; whereby we see plainly that his testimony is not to be depended upon, and so God declares ; “ When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it,” John viii. 44. Since this is the case, he is not the true witness ; therefore what he says ought not to be taken notice of.

I know that he preaches many sermons to God's people, and delivers many prophecies concerning them, which proves what the wise man says, that “ Every fool will be meddling.” However, there is a promise that God will bruise Satan under our feet shortly. Did you ever take notice of this passage?—“ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life,” James i. 12. As also this?—“ Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,” Heb. xii. 6. So that here we see a blessing in temptation, and love in chastisement and scourging. This among us appears a strange thing : we

should naturally think that nothing but displeasure or wrath was there; but it is one of God's ways in shewing his favour, and manifesting his love; and where these things are not, such are to this day under both his curse and his wrath; because you see he scourgeth every son that he receiveth; and in another place he says, "But, if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons," Heb. xii. 8. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things!

God will, more or less, answer all his people in the secret place of thunder by terrible things, but in righteousness: and, as the psalmist says, however sorely we may be broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, yet God will, in his own appointed time, make darkness light before us, and crooked things straight. The enemy shall not always triumph, and taunt us with, "Where is now thy God?" God will surely turn our mourning into dancing; he will put off our sackcloth, and gird us with gladness, to the end that our tongue, which is our glory, may sing his praise, and not be silent. It is written, "He that believeth shall not make haste;" and, lest we should run too fast, get puffed up with pride, and so fall into the condemnation of the devil, the Lord is pleased often to put us in fetters, and give us a load to carry, as Paul says; "Lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given

to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet me." For the removal of this he besought the Lord thrice, and at last obtained a glorious answer; "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9. This thorn was not removed, but then he had strength equal to his day communicated, which was all the same; for it makes no difference whether a weak person carry a load that is light, or a strong person one that is heavy; the one will feel just as comfortable under it as the other. And wonderful it is, but not more so than true, that the Lord carries both his people and their burdens; and therefore it is that no enemy can prevail, and that they all arrive in safety at that land which is very far off.

You will oblige me greatly by letting me hear from you as soon as convenient; and in the mean time believe me to remain, in truth and sincerity,

Your willing servant, for Christ's sake,

CHRISTOPHER GOULDING.

LETTER II.

London, Aug. 1, 1801.

Beloved of God, sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called to be a saint: Peace be multiplied. Amen.

On the fourteenth of last month I duly received your letter, and thanked God for it with all my heart. You and I may well say, with Paul, and to God's honour, that "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom we are chief," 1 Tim. i. 15. When I so shortly replied to your first letter, and in such a singular manner, I have no doubt but you were rather surprised and disappointed. The cause was twofold: first, though you went pretty clearly down into the horrible pit, where all are raised to hope, and from whence all are saved and delivered, yet you did not come so clearly out from thence as I could have wished; and therefore to obtain more particulars concerning this point was the cause of my putting several of those questions to you.—The second thing that induced me so to reply was, there were some things noticed which appeared to tally or agree with my own experience; upon which ground I also proposed other ques-

tions, hoping that a few further particulars would open it up more clearly.

When I had sent my letter off, I then got upon my watch-tower to look out, in expectation of tidings, where I continued, week after week, frequent disappointments being attended with these evil suggestions, "Aye, its all in vain—You will never hear from him any more—He has taken offence at your plainness of speech—You were too close in what you said; therefore be fully assured that the correspondence is closed: It is in vain to expect any further communication.—Thus the adversary carried his point, after preaching in this manner for about six weeks, when I left my station in the tower, and concluded, that from W—m S—n I should never hear more.

At this time I found a desire spring in my heart of writing to my sister, upon a larger scale than a sheet of paper, as I had been accustomed to do; and, when the matter and manner were formed in my mind, I was brought to divide the subject into eight general heads; upon which I began to work, and found, as I proceeded, the Lord's blessing and presence with me, and was satisfied that I enjoyed the approbation of God and the influences of his Spirit. For about a fortnight I found sufficient employment for all my leisure time, and experienced matter flowing so freely into my mind, that I got to the end of two quires of post paper before I could finish.

On the 14th of July, just as I was drawing to the conclusion of my sister's letter, yours arrived. I read it carefully over twice; and as I proceeded felt gratitude of heart spring up, and thanksgiving and praise go forth to God, for the displays of his superabounding grace. When I came to think over in my mind what I had written before yours arrived, and to compare them together, it clearly appeared that yours was answered before it was received. For this I blessed God with all my heart, and could clearly see his good hand in causing the long delay between your first and second letter; for by this means you perhaps may find more things suitable than if you had written, and I had answered you immediately. I shall send you my sister's letter along with this, for your perusal, before it goes to her, that you may judge whether the Lord has had any hand in it or not. Your long delay in writing was a secondary cause of my sister's letter being wrote; for, had you replied immediately, perhaps neither she nor you had seen any such thing. If she ever had, you would not; therefore, as it appears to me that this has been all wisely ordered of God, and he alone the first cause of it, so may he be pleased, for Christ's sake, to command his blessing upon it, and prove it to be nothing less than the word of his own grace, by attending it with his promised power to instruct, encourage, comfort and establish you!

Your last letter, in unison with the first, makes your experience appear quite clear, which I shall presently attend to.

The enemy of our souls has preached many lectures to you lately, I am fully persuaded, upon presumption—hypocrisy—feigned faith—dissembled love—the hope of a hypocrite—the way-side, thorny, and stony-ground hearers; at the conclusion of each lecture making this application—“Thou art the man.” There is not an awful character in the Bible but what has been brought forth as a parallel to you; and I am persuaded that he sometimes argues with you thus; and when faith is out of exercise, and the light of the Lord’s countenance suspended, sadly puzzles and perplexes you upon this ground; ‘How can you be a child of God? Does he not say, that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, while you are full of sin? Does he not declare, that he has loved his children with an everlasting love, and that he will send them a Comforter that shall abide with them for ever? whereas you know that you do not enjoy any such thing. What presumption was it to call God Father, and lay claim to Christ as your Saviour? Your religion is all a delusion, and you will be destroyed at last; for you are full of unbelief, and God declares, “he that believeth not shall be damned.”’ O what an arch-deceiver and cunning adversary! How he can work upon us under the hiding of the Lord’s countenance in this manner! But when the Sun of Righteousness

shines forth again, all the cloud vanishes, and Satan departs for a season, and sits in sackcloth and ashes, while we dwell upon the mount, or enjoy communion with the Lord. When we feast, the devil fasts—when we fast, the devil feasts.

Perhaps it may be instructive to open a little one passage that I have quoted, which is often brought to harass us when weak in faith; which is this; “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,” 1 John iii. 9. This is a very staggering part of scripture to weak believers; for we know, by painful experience, that in many things we all offend; and yet what John says is true—“Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”—In another passage John declares, of himself and all believers, that “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,” 1 John i. 8. Then, if John declares that all have sin, though partakers of the Spirit and his grace, what can he mean when he declares, “Whosoever is born of God sinneth not?” The latter part of the passage says, He that is born of God sinneth not; and 1 John v. 4, casts a little further light upon it: “*Whatsoever* is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Faith, you see, is said to be born of God, and that is a grace of the Spirit; but still this makes it not quite clear.

Elsewhere John explains himself more fully, saying, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John iii. 6. This almost clears it up; and if we go to Paul, he makes the darkness to vanish quite: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me; for I delight in the law of God after the *inward man*; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," Rom. vii. 21—23. Peter calls this inward man the hidden man of the heart, 1 Peter iii. 4. Again: "Knowing this, that our *old man* is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed;" Rom. vi. 6. More plainly still; "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22—24. Again; "Mortify therefore your members, which are upon earth; fornication, uncleanness, &c. seeing that ye have put off the *old man* with his deeds, and have put on the *new man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering," &c. Col. iii. 5—16. Then he turns these two men, the new and the old, into *sin* and *grace*; "Sin shall not have dominion

over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14 : and, Grace shall reign, Rom. v. 21. Then he sets them forth, the old man by the works of the flesh, and the new by the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 19—23. All these particulars together prove that the remaining sin and corruption, which are in all renewed souls, are, because communicated unto us from our first parent Adam, called the old man ; and called a man, because they influence at times the whole man, and are found to work in every faculty of the soul, and in every member of the body. And the grace of God, planted in the hearts of all at conversion, is called a new man, because it is a principle planted in the heart, where corruption and sin had long before reigned ; and therefore, being in our experience younger than corruption, it is called a new man ; though, strictly speaking, grace is older than corruption, because it was given us in Christ from everlasting : but then corruption is experienced in us before grace, which is called the new man ; and called a man, because at times it works in or influences every faculty of the soul, and every member of the body.—Thus, turning the natural corruption of our nature, which is left in us to try, prove, humble, and to do us good in our latter end, into a man ; and the grace of God, which is planted by the Spirit in the hearts of all believers, and which destroys the reign, though not the in-being of sin, and which is to reign through righteousness unto eternal life, into a

man also; John's meaning is made clear, that the person he speaks of is this *new man*, as Paul calls him, and is an incorruptible, a holy man, who cannot sin, or do any thing but what is good, being born of God: while, on the other hand, the *old man*, or the corruptions of our nature, is nothing but sin, a child of the devil, and can do nothing but sin. The devil works in the old man, communicating all his life and power from himself; while God works in the new man, who receives all his life and power from him. Sin and grace are two distinct and separate principles, that cannot unite. One being corrupt, and the other a holy and incorruptible seed, they can have no fellowship with each other, as Paul declares, and so we feel; "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Gal. v. 17.—These two distinct principles, whereby the church is called a company of two armies, Song vi. 13, make up the saint's day of prosperity and adversity. Therefore, whether we read of the law in the members and a law in the mind, of that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit—of the old man and the new—they all mean one and the same thing, and terminate in these two, sin and grace; and, when John treats of a person who never commits sin, nor is able to sin, he means the grace of God in the heart, and nothing else.

I wish you to consider well these few hints

that I have dropped, as we must ever be tossed to and fro upon changes in our frames and feelings, if we are not brought to distinguish the different workings of grace and corruption. Until brought to draw a line here we shall surely go halting, murmuring, fretting and doubting; for there is not a grace of the Spirit planted in us, but there is also a corruption to oppose it, which causes the Christian's continual warfare: but the elder, God declares, shall serve the younger; or, in plainer words, grace shall reign and rule, sin shall not have dominion; which is a comfort to us in fighting the good fight of faith, for eternal life is the end of it.—But, after this long digression, I return to your letters.

I have perused them many times, meditated much upon them, and compared them with the word of God, the standard of all truth, and the only right rule of judgment; for “Whereewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” Answer, “By taking heed thereto according to thy word,” Psalm cxix. 9. I believe in my soul that, according to scripture, your call and conversion are of God, and constitute a real work of grace, as far as I am enlightened to see the genuine work of the Spirit of God upon your heart, and that God is the author of, and will ever own and honour it. And I am sure it differs widely from what passes current in our day, for you can sing both of mercy and judgment—of the severity and also of the goodness of God, having been blessed with a saving, experimental knowledge of him. You have had

a knowledge of him in his law as a just God, and in his dear Son as a Saviour; and this is saving knowledge, and eternal life is included in it; "This is life eternal (says Christ) that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3.

The sum of all God's work upon the souls of sinners is comprised in two branches, wounding and healing; as he says, "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal," Deut. xxxii. 39. And Moses makes a further beautiful declaration of the work of God upon the souls of his elect when he thus speaks; "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men," Psalm xc. 3. According to what I understand to be the meaning of this passage, I purpose, by the good hand of God upon me, to answer your letters, or try your experience.

1st. I will go with you down to destruction; "Thou turnest man to destruction."

2dly. From thence we will travel to your deliverance; "And sayest, Return, ye children of men."

First, then, of your being turned to destruction.

Divine life is the principal blessing, yea, all others naturally terminate in this:—God sent his dear Son into this world that we might have life; and when he puts his Spirit within us, it is that we may live. If we are blessed with faith, "He

that believeth hath everlasting life." If with hope, life is included in it; hence it is called a lively hope. If the Lord is pleased to circumcise our hearts to love him, it is that we may live. If he is pleased to deliver us from all condemnation, by the imputation and application of his dear Son's righteousness, it is justification unto life; so that life is certainly the principal and grand blessing; and so it is written, "As the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the (not simply a blessing, but *the*) blessing, even life for evermore," Psalm cxxxiii. 3. And this commandment, of the blessing of eternal life, was from everlasting given to Christ, as he says, "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which hath sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting," John xii. 49, 50. This commandment is given to Christ as a blessing, and the substance of all others, for Mount Zion, or God's chosen people, and no other; for to them only is the word of eternal life spoken, as Christ says, "My sheep shall hear my voice."—"The time cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." And then he confines this blessing to his people, whom he calls sheep; "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," John v. 25, 28, and x. 27, 28. And thus we see that life is first God the Father's gift to us in Christ; "God hath given to us

eternal life, and this life is in the Son," 1 John v. 11. Christ, as covenant head and mediator, has received a commandment to give this life to all his seed, and to his seed, called his sheep, does this blessing come; and wherever it is received it flows from Christ's fulness by the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the soul; "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63, and 2 Cor. iii. 6.

It is plain that by nature all are dead in trespasses and sins, and so without spiritual or divine life in the soul; and when the set time for the calling of the elect comes, then Christ by his Spirit quickens such, as Paul says, "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. While dead in trespasses and sins, of course there can be no divine life; we are in a state of insensibility, and have no feeling, for all feeling must spring from life. You may take a sword to a dead body, and thrust it through and through, and it cannot be sensible of it. Why? because it has not life: but, if you were to thrust a sword into a living man, he would be sensible enough of it. Just so a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, while in that state, has no feeling whatever. You may preach to him as you please, it has no effect. Tell him he is a child of wrath—is under the curse of God—that if he die as he is he shall perish for ever—it matters not; he gives no credit to such reports; and the reason is, because the word of eternal life has never reached him. Let Christ once make his word the word of

eternal life to the soul of such a dead sinner, and then directly he will feel all that is said. When reproof and rebuke are dealt out, he feels them in his conscience. Let the wrath of God against a sinner be enforced, and let it be proved that all are in a state of condemnation by sin in the sight of God, and he trembles at his word; there is feeling. Such a soul finds application made to his conscience, the word of truth reaches him, and he stands in awe of it. The effects of the first entrance of the word of eternal life we see beautifully in Peter's audience; "they were pricked in their heart, and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 37.

You will be ready, I know, to propose an objection here, and say, "But we read that Stephen's persecutors and murderers were also cut to the heart; they felt the power of convictions (Acts vii. 54) as well as Peter's audience; and therefore how am I to know whether my convictions are from the entrance of eternal life or the vindictive wrath of God, revealed in my natural conscience against me for my sin and hypocrisy? The distinction will always be known by its effects. If the Lord smite a hypocrite, or send a just reproof into his conscience, he will always fly from God, hate the light, will never confess his sin, nor pray to God for pardon or forgiveness; no, never: this we see in Cain, who confessed his punishment, but never his sin to God. Judas confessed his sin to the high priest, but never to

God: But when the Lord is pleased by his Spirit to convict a sinner, to quicken the soul of one of his elect, and shine into his heart to see what he really is; then the same Spirit that quickens operates as a spirit of grace and supplication, and leads such a soul with heartfelt confession to God, to seek after and implore forgiveness from him. Thus we may easily tell whether our convictions are from the Spirit or not. And that this is always the effect of convictions of sin by the Spirit, is plain in many. As soon as David had his soul quickened, and his sin charged home upon him, directly he says, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow: then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul," Psalm cxvi. 3, 4. When life reached the soul of the prodigal, then he felt a famine and his want of the bread of life; under which he was led to call upon God, and make confession to him; "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," Luke xv. 18, 19.

The first sign of life, or God's quickening you to feel where and what you really were, you speak of thus:—

"In the early part of my life I was an untoward man; had no religion in me, though strictly brought up a quaker; but, after I settled

in the world, the reflections of my sinful life came with great force and power into my mind, and the judgments of God stared me in the face.” —This impression of power upon your soul was the first beginning of God’s work in you, and under it you set off in search after something; found yourself restless and alarmed, and under this your soul died to all the pleasures of the world; you experienced the quaker’s light within, that they talk so much about, turn into darkness, for it never could shew you one step to glory:— This was evidently the time when God’s quickening work began in you; he then gave you life to feel that you was a sinner; where there is no life there is no feeling nor motion. Observe this set forth in Ezekiel, where the state we are all in by nature, while in captivity to sin and Satan, is represented by a multitude of dry bones, all scattered over a valley, with the flesh quite peeled off. And equally dead to all spiritual life, and to God, is every one while in a state of nature, as those bones were to animal life. The parallel is exact. The prophet is ordered to go all round about them, and to make his observation upon them; then the Lord asks this question; “Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.” Intimating that no power but his can ever restore them to life. Then he ordered him to preach unto them; and the prophet did not consult with carnal reason, but off he set at God’s command, and fell to work; “So I prophesied as

I was commanded; and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and bones came together, bone to his bone," Ezek. xxxvii. 1—7. Here we see that, as the prophet preached, life entered into the bones; and as life entered, directly there was a noise among them, and a shaking; bones came together, bone to his bone. And just so it is to this day. It matters not whether by preaching the word or not; whether in or out of the means; for the Lord is not confined to any particular means in his work; whenever he quickens the souls of dead sinners to feel their state, directly there is a noise or cry among them; hence Isaiah, when he was quickened, exclaimed, "Wo is me, for I am undone."—And Peter's audience, when they were pricked in their hearts, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And the jailer, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Some declare, they are sure they shall perish, others that it is impossible God can ever dwell with such sinners as they feel themselves to be. And there is always a great noise attending the Lord's quickening, awakening, and alarming power among such sinners; and not only a noise, but also a shaking; they quake and tremble through the dread and apprehensions of wrath, and shake from head to foot, fearing they shall go down into the pit without being pardoned. O the sensations of such! I know them by heartfelt experience.—A noise and a shaking there certainly are; let what David says remain as a faint standard

for such feelings; "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me; and I said, O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest," Psalm lv. 5, 6.

But the bones, it is said, "came together;" and so they do; for, were there fifty sinners quickened near each other, you would see them communing together, and comparing their experience one with another; and they would cleave to and feel one for the other—the bones do come together, and also "bone to his bone." Christ is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; and whenever divine life enters the souls of sinners, and they begin to move God-wards, to shake and tremble at his word, these shall all, not only be brought into heartfelt union with one another, but also into union with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit shall reveal the everlasting love of God, the bond of the covenant, and of all real union, to and in them; and then the joint is effectually made, for "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. All this is the effect of life communicated to the soul. And I am confident that you can appeal both to God and conscience that these things have been found in some degree in you.—If you say, Yes; then eternal life was given you, though at the time perhaps you could not take the comfort of it.

Again, you say, "When I was first wounded

with a sense of my guilt and unworthiness, the law was applied in all its spiritual meaning, and I found all my sins set in order before me, and an angry God appeared against me, ready to execute and pour forth all his just wrath upon me. I was then in a very distressing situation; my sleep in a great measure left me, and I was terrified with dreams. I then began to pray, and promise to God new obedience, and set a watch over my tongue; but I found that I was not able to yield that obedience to the law which it required. In this distressing situation I had none to guide my feet to that path which leads to Zion, to shew me the merits of Christ, and how God could be reconciled to sinners."

When the Lord is pleased to quicken the soul, then he sends his law home upon the conscience in all its unlimited demands; and, by the dreadful reproof and rebuke we feel in our hearts, we cannot go on any longer in sin. Our old wicked ways we cannot pursue. He plants his fear in our hearts, which represents us always under the eye and narrow inspection of God, and so springs up, attended with severe lashes of conscience, whenever we would pursue evil, that we are sensibly withstood; and this the Lord declares shall be the case; "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," Prov. ix. 10. "I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she (the church) shall not find her paths," Hos. ii. 6. And such keen convictions and cutting reproofs

reach the heart, when God's power is first put forth in us, that we are effectually stopped in our evil way, and cannot go on in it. The Lord declares that he will thus come near to all his people in judgment, and that he will be a swift witness against them, Mal. iii. 5. And, when he thus comes, he arraigns us at the bar of our conscience, bringing us in guilty there; and at the bar of his holy law, where we are cursed and condemned. Indeed, without a law-work upon the heart, it is impossible that we could ever be made sensible of sin, or feel that we are lost; be brought to hunger and thirst after righteousness, or feel the need of salvation. David says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked," Psalm xciv. 12, 13.—What we learn by this (for it is our schoolmaster) is, that we are sinners: "By the law is the knowledge of sin."—"The strength of sin is the law." And, when the commandment came home to Paul, he says, "Sin reviv'd and I died;" and "I had not known sin but by the law." When David felt the law come home he speaks thus; "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy sore displeasure; for thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore: there is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin; for mine iniquities are gone over my head,

as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me," Psalm xxxviii. 1—4. Again, "When thou (O Lord) with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth," (fretting a garment), Psalm xxxix. 11.

When the law comes and stirs up our sins, and they are set in order before our eyes, then follows the curse. The law works wrath in us, brings us into bondage to the fear of death, and under the dread of destruction; for it is the ministration of death, and brings the soul sensibly into a state of death and condemnation before God, stirring up our enmity against him: for no sooner does it work wrath in us, but our enmity and hatred spring up against God; and we then view him in his justice and terrible majesty, as a consuming fire. All the law can do for us, is to bring us in guilty, to curse us, work wrath in us, condemn us to death, and set an angry God before us. As our school-master, it teaches us these things, or by it we are so taught, and they are lessons that must be learned. I may add one thing more; which is, that here we are all taught to feel that we have no strength, and cannot atone for one sin; and by this chastening rod God is pleased to drive us out of all confidence in the flesh. In order to which he is determined that we shall have a fair trial, to see what free-will and human power can effect; and therefore no sooner does he quicken our dead souls to feel, and shine into our hearts to see, that we are sinners, under the curse of the law and the

wrath of God, which it reveals, but directly we set to work, in our own strength, to turn over a new leaf (as we say), to work out our own salvation, and to bring God in debtor by our obedience to the law. We see this in David, who, as soon as he was brought to think on his ways, and found himself burdened with sin, set to work to keep the law; for this is the way that seemeth right unto us all when first awakened, though the end of it is death. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies; I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments," Psalm cxix. 59, 60. In this same way you went to work when the law came home to you. You then promised new obedience; and determined to work out your own salvation; but, after all your labour and toil, you had no success, were cursed both by law and conscience, and still under sin, do all you could, as you say; "I set to work, according to their plan (the Arminians and bastard Calvinists), to work out my own salvation; but found that, instead of growing better, I grew worse, by adding sin to sin. I found that I could not live one day without sin in word or thought; and had no chance of getting works in store to atone for my past sins; which caused me to go heavy laden with them, both to the Arminians and Calvinists, asking many questions, but receiving few satisfactory answers."

Here you had a fair trial of keeping the law. You worked hard, and meant well; but still there

was the burden, attended with such scriptures as these sounding in your ears all the day long; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. And, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," Ez. xviii. 4.—O, it is a blessing indeed to be properly instructed out of the law: here you found free-will of no use, and that human power, so much boasted of in our day, was perfect weakness; that, when the Ethiopian can change his skin, and the leopard his spots, then might you, that had been accustomed to do evil, do good.

The law requires love to God with all the heart; but you found your carnal mind to be enmity against him: and so long as we only view him as a holy, just, and angry God, in the law, so long we remain in enmity to him; for all the time we believe in our souls that he will damn us we cannot love him. It is impossible. Our carnal minds are not thus subject to the law of God, which requires love to him, neither indeed can be. The law requires perfect righteousness and perfect holiness; while you sensibly felt yourself nothing but sin, and found the law hold you as fast as possible. You could neither deliver yourself from the sin it stirred up, the curse it revealed, the wrath it wrought, the bondage to which it gendered, nor from the death and condemnation it administered. 'No,' you will say, 'from none of these things could I, by any effort

“of my own, deliver myself.” This was the school-master giving you some wholesome lessons, making you feel yourself a proper object for sovereign mercy. Here David was obliged to give up all his strength and ability. I told you before that, when the law entered his heart, and stirred up his sin, he made haste and delayed not to keep the commandments. And what was his success? Just the same as that of every other workman at this perfect rule; “I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad,” Psalm cxix. 96. He found it required perfection, and that perfection was not in him. The commandment was exceeding broad in its demands; it called for that which he could not give, and therefore he prays God, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified,” Psalm cxliii. 2.

But again; for you are now drawing nigh the brink of the horrible pit; one more remove will carry you down there. You say, after you felt yourself sensibly burdened, “I then read some authors upon free grace, particular redemption, predestination and election; and, comparing these doctrines with the word of God, believed them to be the language of heaven; while Arminianism appeared to contradict itself. The question then rose, whether or not I was interested in that great redemption? And, after much reasoning with myself, I concluded I was a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction. I used to reason on different pas-

sages of scripture after this manner; "He was wounded for our transgressions;" yes, for theirs, but not for my transgressions. Esau and I had both sought after repentance carefully with tears, but found it not, nor ever shall. "The wicked shall be turned into hell." I am above measure wicked, and hell is my portion. So, after three years' hard struggling with my sin, I lost all hopes of ever being reconciled to God, either in this world or that which is to come." And thus, when the Lord had quickened you to feel; driven you out of all your refuges of lies; destroyed your false hope; rooted out of your tabernacle your carnal confidence; stripped you naked, and made you a burdened sinner; chased you out of free-will and human power; shewed you what an arm of flesh and a form of godliness could do for a sensible sinner; what the doctrines and traditions of men could effect, that they were only like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint, entirely useless things to place any reliance upon; then you went sensibly into the horrible pit, and believed that there was as much salvation for a devil as for yourself. You found yourself burdened, a cursed sinner, a child of wrath, dead in law, under the sentence of condemnation, free from all righteousness, destitute of every thing to make you meet for heaven; and, what was still worse, not able to procure any one thing necessary for that inheritance. I know you'll say that you found this to be exactly the case.

Two things bring us into this horrible pit; the one is sin, the other God's wrath; which brought David into it, as they do all God's children:—"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow," Psalm cxvi. 3. The sorrows of death are our sins, the cause of all sorrow; and they are called the sorrows of death, because they bind the soul over to death; "The soul that sinneth it shall die." These compassed David, as they do all others whom the Lord quickens; "The pains of hell gat hold upon me." The pains of hell mean the wrath of God; for he declares that his wrath is a fire kindled in his anger, that shall burn against the wicked to the lowest hell, Deut. xxxii. 22. All hell torments spring from the wrath of God and man's sin meeting and working together in the souls of sinners. The Lord was pleased to enter into judgment with David, as he does with all the elect, in this world, and therefore he brought him to feel his sins a burden; revealed his wrath against him as a transgressor of the law in his conscience; and under the feeling sense of this it was that he sunk: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul: I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me," Psalm lxix. 1, 2. This is the pit. The deep mire means his original sin and actual transgressions; these deep waters and floods mean the wrath and curse of God that he sensibly laboured

under ; and this place is called by him an horrible pit, Psalm xl. It is called a pit because, when our sin is charged home upon our conscience, and God's wrath is revealed in us against the same, then under this the soul sensibly sinks into self-despair ; into heaviness of spirit we go ; are bowed down, and cannot rise in hope. It is called an horrible pit because, look which way we will, there appears no way of escape. If we look to the law, we are condemned by it ; if to our past life, nothing but destruction and misery are to be found in it ; if within, there is nothing but sin and wrath ; if at temporal death, it presents nothing but eternal death beyond it ; if to the Lord, he appears to to us full of wrath and fiery indignation, which shall devour his adversaries ; if forward, to the day of judgment, we believe that nothing will be pronounced upon us then but " Go ye cursed into everlasting fire." And it is called an horrible pit, because of the horrible sensations we feel, the horrible temptations and buffetings of the devil we labour under, the army of terrors that surround us, and a whole troop of guilty and slavish fears that work within us : this being the case, it may well be called a horrible pit. This pit destroys all the religion of nature, root and branch. Nothing can stand here but God's own work ; we stand by his power alone. And, that his people may be emptied, broken down, effectually stripped, and made proper objects for Christ to save, he keeps them often lying long here, that they may

perfectly know the plague of their own heart; their carnal enmity, hardness, pride, rebellion, blindness; the power that sin and Satan have over them; their foolishness, knowing nothing as they ought to know, and doing nothing as they ought to do; and that, when their deliverance comes, they may be grateful and thankful to God for it, and ascribe the whole of their salvation to his rich, free, and superabounding grace.

You were here when you say, "I then began to strive with God, and took him to be an unreasonable being, who required such works of me as I was not able to perform, and then to punish me for what I could not do.—Then I began to dispute the authority of the scriptures, and concluded that they were made by designing men for their own ends; for which reason I ceased to read; but still the pains of hell, and the wretched state of the damned, kept me in continual fear, and how to remedy it I knew not.—I then began to dispute the being of a God; but, when I looked up to that glorious body of light, the sun, I thought it too grand a production for nature to bring forth; and I could not perceive, neither had I ever read, that it had suffered the least diminution of heat since its first institution; so I concluded that it might be supported by an almighty hand, seeing that many things in nature decay."

O the wretched rebellion and enmity there is against God in the human heart! It is beyond all description. An almighty hand not only holds

the sun in being, but an almighty hand held you up, and supported you in the furnace of affliction, and in the horrible pit, or else you had either gone mad, or out of the world by suicide, and so into hell. If the Lord did not support and strengthen us in the horrible pit, we could never stand one day ; but this he has promised, " When they fall they shall be holpen with a little help," Daniel xi. 34. You would fain have fled out of the Lord's hand, but he would not suffer it ; he kept you by his power while his strong hand was upon you, chastening you for your profit, that he might in the end bring you savingly to himself. The prophet gives a very striking description of our rebellion, while it works against God : " Thy sons have fainted ; they lie at the head of all the streets as a wild bull in a net ; they are full of the fury of the Lord, and the rebuke of thy God," Isai. li. 20. Put a tame bull in a net, and it would make kicking and plunging enough, but a wild bull would make ten times more : and, when the Lord's reproofing power reaches the heart, we are as furious under it as a wild bull in a net could be ; rebelling, kicking, fretting, plunging, and raging like devils ; but God will hold us here until all our strength is gone, and we are resigned to his sovereign will, and can justify him in sending us to hell. This you know as well as I.

You say you were led to doubt the being of a God, yet you imagined there must be one by the works of creation. Well ; the being of a God

Paul declares is to be known by his eternal power and Godhead, manifested in the works of creation, Rom. i. 20. You were also led to call in question the divinity of the scriptures. I know you would gladly have believed that the scriptures were not true, and that there was no God to punish sin; but then the pains of hell, the wretched state of the damned, and a guilty conscience, of which you had a feeling sense, all these working within, destroyed both your atheism and deism, root and branch; and proved not merely the existence of a God, which the works of creation do, but that there was a just and holy God, who will by no means clear the guilty: and, though you ceased to read the scriptures, yet the scriptures never ceased to condemn you. Every threatening in God's book you believed in your heart, not notionally, but upon feeling; for you had strong faith then in the truth, justice, holiness, and immutability of God, though you had none in his grace, love, favour, or mercy.

You thought God unreasonable in requiring of you that which he knew you could not do, and in punishing you for not doing. But in this thou speakest not the thing that is right of God. I will answer thee that God is just. He made man upright, created him in his image, pronounced him very good, and therefore he was perfectly holy, and perfectly righteous. How did this perfection leave him? By sin. And from whom did sin come—from God? No, from the devil. Very

well; then, if sin came from the devil, and entered by man's disobedience, our inability springs from ourselves; and, though we have by our own sin lost the power to obey, the Lord still retains his power to command perfect obedience of us, and is perfectly just in punishing all that come short therein. The commandments are particularly useful to us; as, 1st, We see in them what we were; 2dly, what we now are; 3dly, the justice and holiness of God; 4thly, we are driven out of all confidence in ourselves by them, and from all hope of salvation in them; and, 5thly, we are led to look after the free promises of God, wherein he has promised to work freely in us all that the law requires of us, for the Lord requires nothing of us but what he has freely given us in his promises, which are all yea and amen in Christ. The moral law is a precious and profitable schoolmaster, for we should never be fit to take our degrees in Christ's college without it: and, when we are delivered from it, by faith in Christ, then we can look back and bless God for the teaching with which he favoured us while under it. The law is good and profitable to all God's elect when it is handled lawfully, and kept in its proper place. Christ is the end of it; all its work and teaching being to convince us of our need of him; and, when we are sensibly united to him, then the law lets us go, for it can hold us no longer.

Thus the Lord was pleased to bring you sensibly down into the horrible pit; and when he had

kept you there some time resignation and submission seemed to work in you to his sovereign will, for you say, "In this wretched state I strove to make myself as happy as I could, acknowledging God to be just in my destruction three ways. 1st. I was dead in law, seeing I had wilfully and knowingly transgressed it when I ought to have kept it for creation and preservation. 2dly, As a sovereign, he had a right to put me in the covenant, or leave me out, seeing I had no demand nor claim upon him. 3dly, As clay in the hand of the potter, he had a right to form me into what sort of vessel he pleased, and, like the clay, I had no right to find fault. I purposed then to lead a moral life, and set to work in my family to nip every vice in its bud, and plant every virtue in them, and strove to shew them a pattern by myself, and prayed to God to bless me in my basket and store; and, if he had not a purpose of love for any of my family more than he had for me, that he would put his fear in their hearts, to prevent them from running into licentiousness; and I prayed for no spiritual blessing for a whole year, as that appeared quite out of the question." Here then God brought you just to the spot where the door of hope is opened to all his elect. Every door appeared shut; no way of escape open, and yet you were brought to resignation to the Lord's sovereign will, to justify him in his dealings with you if he sent you to hell, and to condemn yourself. This, my dear brother soldier, was a precious

work of God's almighty power upon you, making you willing even to put your mouth in the dust, in order to obtain hope. You now know, that what you called morality was no such thing. Why? Because all the time we are under the law, we are under the reigning power of sin; so Paul declares; "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace." Then it is plain that all the time we are under the law sin reigns. The standard of morality is the law of God. It requires perfection; and, as all are sinners, there can be no moral living in any that are under it. All the works of such are sinful; wherefore it is said to be a bringing forth fruit unto death. Indeed, morality springs not from the moral law, but from the grace and Spirit of God in the heart, which is the root of all good living, and of all acceptable obedience, and nothing else. Where grace reigns sin is subdued; and those that walk in the Spirit do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. You know more of morality now, since you have been a happy partaker of the Spirit and grace of God, than ever you could while under the law; as then you could do nothing but sin, which now has not dominion over you, because you are delivered from the law, and under that grace which shall reign through the righteousness of Christ unto eternal life.

You say, "And I prayed for temporal things, but for no spiritual blessing, for a whole year, for that appeared out of the question." I believe you

prayed for temporal blessings only, with your lips; but that you prayed for no spiritual blessing with your heart I do not believe. Had you not in your heart a feeling sense of your wants? Yes, you'll say, I was a sensible sinner, and groaned and sighed under my burden and wretchedness all the day long. Very well; then those wants, groans, and sighs, were as prevalent prayers as ever you put up to God in your life with words from your mouth, nay probably more so, for God will never hear the mouth without the heart; but he often hears the heart without the mouth. And observe, when Israel was in Egypt, in their worst bondage, by reason of their task-masters, they groaned under their misery and cruel treatment; and when the Lord appeared to Moses he told him, "I have heard the groanings of the children of Israel, and am come down to deliver them; and now, behold, I will send thee," Exodus ii. 23—25, and vi. 5. Acts vii. 54. And Paul says of the blessed Spirit, that he maketh intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26. Again, "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee." And the Lord declares that it shall come before him, and prevail too; "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him," Psalm lxxix. 11, and xii. 5. Thus you see both groaning and sighing are prevalent prayers to God, though the mouth is un-

fruitful. And therefore that whole year you prayed more or less all the day long, I believe in my soul; and, if you look back and examine, you will acknowledge that you certainly did. All the time you were in motion God would not suffer you to find any rest for your soul, nor for the sole of your feet; but you were kept travelling on in search after something, though you could not tell what. There was a vacancy and a space within which nothing beneath the sun could fill, and a restlessness which no created good could satisfy; this is plain by what you say—"About this time I went forty miles on foot to hear a Calvinist minister preach, and staid with him two days, though in his preaching and private conversation he could not describe my case." No, Sir, God's writing upon a convinced sinner's heart is not to be read by any but those who are ministers of the Spirit, and such ministers are scarce and rare; and so they were in Job's days; but Elihu was one of them to him, and the only scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven that Job met with; and the Lord confirmed all that that good man said. He gives a wonderful account of a work of grace upon the soul, beginning under the experience of severe bodily afflictions; observe it well, as recorded in the 33d chapter of Job. Such workmen as Elihu are compared to one among a thousand; and in our days they are more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. We may go with our burdens to whom and where we please

when in soul troubles; but, as God himself brings us sensibly to feel their weight, so none but himself can remove them; and he will suffer us to try every means, and be disappointed in them all, until we are led to Christ Jesus; for "to him shall the gathering of the people be," who removes both our burden from the conscience, and the yoke of the moral law from our neck; and that because of the anointing, or unction of the Holy Spirit, working faith to believe in him as our Saviour. Read Isai. x. 27.

It is an unspeakable blessing to be favoured with the gift of a minister of the Spirit, who can go through the gates, clearly cast up the highway, gather out the stones, or stumbling blocks, and explain and make clear the seemingly contradictory parts of scripture to the poor, dark, sensible sinner, and lift up Christ crucified as a standard before him, Isai. lxii. 10; where gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, are received, that the Lord God may dwell among them, Psalm lxviii. 18. For the want of such an one you laboured long in confusion, and wandered from one place to another, seeking rest, but finding none; till the Lord, in his own good time, fulfilled his promise to you without the means of preaching. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them; I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the

wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together; that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it," Isai. xli. 17—20. What a glorious description is this of poor sinners being delivered from their sin and barrenness under the law, where they are pierced by the curse it reveals, burdened by the sin it stirs up, and exercised by the wrath of God which it administers; and of their being brought into union with Christ Jesus, and sensibly into Mount Zion, or the church of the living God, where all his springs of grace and mercy, and the unction of the Spirit, the river of the water of life, flows! When here, they are compared to oil trees, because the Holy Spirit is in them, and gives them the experience of the oil of joy for mourning; to those other ever-green trees they are compared, because they have eternal life in them, and so shall never perish nor finally wither. And sinners being thus translated, and thus ingrafted into the Saviour, and planted in the house of the Lord, is all God's own work; and such must and shall give him all the glory, and ever declare that "the hand of Jehovah hath done this."

When you were in your distress, you say that you found none to instruct you; "In this dis-

troubling situation I had none to guide my feet into that path that leads to Zion, to shew me the merits of Christ, and how the Lord is reconciled to sinners in him." And many poor souls there are, scattered up and down in the land, in the same experience, who feel themselves sinners; are all in motion, in distress, and seeking something that they cannot describe; wanting their case pointed out, their feelings and sensations touched: but lo! they seek after these things in vain. Nevertheless, should outward means fail, the Lord, by his Spirit, will sooner or later preach to them himself, display a door of hope and the door of mercy to them, whereby they shall enter into a state of salvation.

Well, I think I have got you now clearly shut up in the horrible pit; or, as David says, "Thou turnest man to destruction." All your natural religion was destroyed, root and branch, and here you saw nothing but destruction, look which way you would. The Lord turned you to destruction, as it were, in your own eyes, though then you were lying close to the gate of life, and did not know it, for Christ came into this world to save just such a sinner as you found yourself to be—a heavy laden, a cursed, an ungodly sinner; one without strength, sorely broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death; a hungry and thirsty sinner; naked, blind, deaf, maimed, halt; a fool, knowing nothing as you ought to know; a child of wrath, an enemy to

God; lost to all intents and purposes; wounded in spirit, broken in heart, through the terrors of the law and the reproaches of men and devils; a sensible captive, brought to plead guilty! When you got here, then, but not till then, did the Lord begin to say, as he does to all his elect when the time comes to turn their captivity. "Return, ye children of men." This is the very place for the opening of a door of hope to the sensible sinner; and exactly here I found it opened; let me therefore shew you the Lord's opening of it here to you also, which brings me to my second head, viz. "And sayest, Return, ye children of men." You thus express yourself; "Dr. Martin Luther's Thoughts upon the Galatians fell into my hands, which I carefully perused, and from which I received a little light, with some comfort. Afterwards, while reading the scriptures one day, as I was bemoaning my wretched state, the martyrdom of Stephen came into my mind, and I thought with what pleasure he must have beheld the heavens open to receive him, longing to be in his place, though I did not desire his crown, thinking there was room for us both." This was the first beginning of God's making darkness light before you. He had already led you, and was with you to support, uphold, protect and defend you; and it was he who took you by the hand and taught you to go; though you were still blind to what all this would end in, and your thoughts were that it would terminate in your destruction; whereas

God's thoughts were thoughts of peace and not of evil towards you, to give you an expected end. As your desires went up, and a longing for happiness, so the blessed Spirit continued his heavenly teaching; and the next thing was the laying a foundation for hope; and he did it as you thus describe, "I thought I had never actually committed David's sin, and he obtained pardon. I had committed Peter's sin, and he obtained pardon. I thought I had never persecuted the church of God, as St. Paul did, and he obtained pardon." Here, William, thou didst get among thy brethren;—all wretched sinners, saved freely by grace. The door of hope now began to appear in full view. I know the sensations of soul you felt at this discovery were as life from the dead; for, though your burden was heavy, yet the discovery of a way of salvation made it feel much easier. "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness leaning upon his beloved?" It is W—m S—n of Faughheads, as the Lord liveth!

But you go on: "Then the words of the prophet came with power; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come

unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people," Isai. lv. 1—4. "I thought I was the very person the prophet described," (and you certainly was), "thirsting for life, deeply in debt, and had nothing to pay with; then the words of the Lord came into my mind, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. I found I was heavy laden with my guilt, and wanted rest; and in these two passages of scripture I saw my picture exactly drawn, or my case clearly described, and from that time I had hope that I was still an object of mercy." Yes, the door of hope was then set wide open before you; and, as that was displayed to your mind, so directly went in both faith and hope of pardon, and of better days; and, though at this time you did not experience the removal of your sin, guilt, bondage, and dreadful apprehensions, yet I know you felt them with less weight, for you received such an encouraging expectation, and such supporting power spring up, upon this revelation of Christ, as the only way of access to God, and of the free promises of pardon to the worst of sinners in him, that you sunk no more in the horrible pit, but sensibly felt a sure foot-hold for faith and hope of pardon and salvation to rest upon; and a hope of pardon through Christ you then obtained, and all your desires:

every thought of your soul centered in Christ; all your confidence and hopes gathered to him, and in no other way did you expect deliverance; and, as he was revealed to your mind and enlightened understanding as an all-sufficient Saviour, and your longing soul sent out all its keen desires after him, so you sensibly felt all your sins, bondage, the wrath and torment you laboured under, with the temptations of Satan, begin to loosen, move, and get lighter; and, as he drew nearer and nearer, and God's free love to the worst of sinners was displayed and a little impressed upon your soul, so you felt your heart enlarging to receive him, and sweet humbling feelings began to break in upon your heart, so as to soften and remove, in some degree, its hardness. Yes, you'll say, this was really the case. Well, this was the heavenly lover flourishing, or shewing himself through the lattice, to draw the affections of his spouse to himself, who was given to him in eternity, for then God the Father made this match for the Son, Matt. xxii. 2, and Eph. v. 30—32.

Now give ear, O ye heavens, for the next visitation of Christ is his coming with the shoes, ring, and wedding garment, and revealing himself as the fatted calf, that music and dancing may be the experience of this returning prodigal, who goes on; "And, in reading over the 17th chapter of St. John, the dying love of Christ was poured into my heart, and I thought I saw Jesus hanging upon the cross, bearing the most cruel pains for

my sins, of which I now felt the pardon and forgiveness; and never till then had I such a sight of myself, of my unworthiness, of the heinousness of sin, nor a real, heartfelt repentance. I perceived that all my former repentance was that of the hypocrite, and was still mixed with something peevish and rebellious; I pitied self, but found hard thoughts of God to possess my soul. Amazing love! Did the Lord Jesus leave the mansions of bliss and glory, where every pleasure is in all its fulness, to snatch a rebel, a blasphemer, a deist, an atheist, from the jaws of eternal death! O love, which has no equal! O Lord, I would be willing to shed tears of blood for my sin, if it was of any importance to thee; but nothing can add unto thy happiness, or in the least diminish thy glory. Upon this manifestation, my stony heart was removed, a heart of flesh was given; and I was so filled with the love of God, as to be almost swallowed up in wonder, love, and praise. All my hard thoughts on the best of beings, together with my sin and unbelief, fled away, like the morning dew when touched by the scorching rays of the sun. My soul was charmed with ideas of heaven, and brought into a state somewhat similar to that of St. Paul's, when he desired to be dissolved and be with Christ. I enjoyed a heaven upon earth; my thoughts ascended up before the throne, and by the eye of faith I beheld the glorious reward of inheritance that awaits the redeemed of the Lord, which the natural eye cannot see, nor the

heart ever form any true conceptions of; and the thoughts of joining the glorious throng above, at the Lord's appointed time, made me almost dead to every thing in this world. Now, after I had this imaginary interview" (he means visionary view in faith) "with Christ, I had almost a continual spring of comforts for some years."

This was a wonderful deliverance wrought out for you of God. The Lord Jesus Christ was revealed to your mind, heart and conscience, as crucified for you. You saw him by the eye of faith, and that of your illuminated understanding, as working out and bringing in an everlasting righteousness for the worst of sinners, and yourself among them. You saw him finishing a perfect salvation, and paying a perfect redemption price, to obtain your release; and, as he was discovered in the vision of faith, and his dying love reached your heart, so faith (of interest in him) laid hold of, and brought him, and all that he is to and has for sinners into your heart: and, as faith exercised itself upon his precious blood, righteousness, and dying love to you, so the burden of sin was directly removed from your conscience. The law let you go, and could no longer curse nor condemn you. Justice was fully satisfied, and Christ appeared as the sheath of that sword.—Pardon, peace, and the love of God, like a river, entered your soul, and carried legal bondage, slavish fear, hardness of heart, enmity against God, the fear of death, wrath of God, curse of a

broken law, with the devil and his reproaches, all away together.

—— I wist not what was become of all mine accusers, and never more sought after them; for in their stead I found joy and praise spring up in my soul to Christ, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. The unmerited love of God in Christ Jesus, to such a hell-deserving sinner as me, melted me down, and drew forth that godly sorrow and evangelical repentance that need never to be repented of. My heart and affections entered heaven. I rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory: forgot my former poverty, and remembered my misery no more; and could say, with Zion of old, that “when the Lord thus turned my captivity I was like them that dream; my mouth was filled with laughter, and my tongue with singing; and they even said among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for him,” Psalm cxxvi. 1, 2. I appeared as a wonder to many, but to none so great a wonder as myself. I conversed with my dear Saviour; heaped ten thousand blessings upon his precious majesty; made my boast of him all the day long, as the fairest among ten thousand; yea, the altogether lovely he appeared. I looked at him whom I had pierced, and mourned over him, and felt a sympathy for him in his sufferings. I saw every thing with new eyes. The mysteries of the kingdom shone forth with fresh glory, and the blessed Spirit filled me with unutterable consolations, so that I could

hardly bear up under them. I worshipped God in spirit and in truth, and praised him with joyful lips, and in Christ I enjoyed fulness of satisfaction; there was no want which he did not supply, no vacancy which he did not fill. I was sure I was complete in him, and that God the Father was well pleased with me in him; for, instead of his appearing as an angry judge and a consuming fire in a broken law, he shone forth in his dear Son as the best of fathers, and as nothing but love in the altogether-lovely Jesus; and in prayer and praise I could approach him with the fullest assurance of confidence that I was an object of his everlasting love, for I felt it in my heart casting out all fear and torment. Old things were passed away, and all things were become new. I was fit for no business, nor company for any one but the Lord, the spirits of just men made perfect, or the elect angels. I walked in heavenly-mindedness, which was attended with both life and peace. And, as in my trouble and misery I could not sleep for distress, so now I could not sleep for blessing and praising God for the wonders of his redeeming love, and for the displays of his matchless grace. I loathed myself in my own sight for my iniquity; and the devil himself did not appear blacker, nor more base and unworthy, than W—m S—n did, though in my Covenant Head and precious Saviour I was sure that I was all fair, without spot, acceptable and well pleasing to God in the perfect righteousness

of his dear Son.—This I know you will say was really the case; and, if so, it was a real, true, genuine deliverance. Then you passed from death unto life; obtained justification before God; was delivered from the law, and so no more a servant under that legal yoke, but manifestively a son of God by faith in Christ Jesus. You now found repentance unto life, which differs from that legal repentance you experienced while under the law. This flowed out freely as the pardoning love of God in Christ Jesus entered your heart, and was attended with the most cordial love and affection to him that pardoned you, and a hatred to yourself on account of your sin: but that under the law was forced out under the wrath of God and the lashes of a guilty conscience; and under it you pitied self, loved sin in your heart, and hated God, wishing that there was no God to punish sin. Where God pardons a sinner, the effect of it will always be this; as peace enters the soul upon the forgiveness of sin, so it will always be attended with love to God that pardons; as the Saviour says when he was with Simon speaking of Mary.—“This woman’s sins were many; they are forgiven her, and she loveth much; and where little is forgiven the same loveth little;” Luke vii. 47. So that love to God shall always be shed abroad, in some measure, where pardon of sin takes place, by the exercising of faith upon the precious blood and righteousness of our dear Redeemer; and thus it may be known when we are pardoned by the

effects that follow. Allow me to shew you two characters that agree with you in the scriptures, and consider them with attention. The one is the prodigal son, as recorded in the 15th chapter of St. Luke; the other is Ephraim, who represents all the elect of God; read Jer. xxxi. 18—20. Both these were led to repentance unto life by the manifestation of the goodness of God to them in pardoning them freely; and the Lord's work upon their souls is a parallel to that which he has performed upon yours.

When the Almighty is pleased to bring a sinner down into the horrible pit, such a one could never be raised to hope, without a free promise of pardon to sinners being revealed and applied.—Where there is no promise there can be no hope. The devils that fell are for ever excluded from all hope of recovery, because there is no promise made to them. And, was there no promise made to sinners, they could never be raised to hope neither; but, as there is the promise of pardon and salvation for them in Christ, so, when the promises are revealed and applied to them, then hope springs up; and, when the lovingkindness of God to them in Christ is discovered, and they find the impressions of his love upon their souls, then they are brought to believe in the love of God to them; but where no promise is revealed, there can be no foundation for hope; and where the lovingkindness of God in Christ Jesus is not manifested, such can never believe that he has a

love to them: it is impossible; for we have such a feeling sense of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and appear so far from God by wicked works, when we are convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, by the Spirit of God, that, like the publican in the temple, we should never dare to look God in the face and call him Father, was not the Holy Ghost to work faith in our hearts to believe in his everlasting love, and to shed it abroad in our hearts, bearing his witness to our adoption and sonship. And this invaluable gift and blessing come to us according the eternal purpose and pre-appointment of God, and not for any cause out of himself; as it is written, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 5, 6. Again; "And because ye are sons (by election and predestination), God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6.

David came up out of the horrible pit just in the same manner as you did. Before he was raised to hope he was brought to resignation and submission to God's will, as he says, "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry." When he lay there a promise was revealed to him, for he says, "Fulfil thy word to thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." As hope upon God's word of promise wrought, so he began to rise; and, as Christ in

the promise was revealed, so faith of deliverance sprung up, and he was kept watching, waiting, and looking out for it: "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden upon the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us," Psalm cxxiii. 1, 2. Then his desires went out after him; "Lord, all my desire is before thee," Psalm xxxviii. 9. And, as his desires went out, so prayer also kept constantly going up; "Prayer also shall be made for him continually," Psalm lxxii. 15. Then faith laid hold of and brought him into the heart, and he obtained the pardon of his sin; "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living," Psalm xxvii. 13. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. When pardon was obtained, then he was delivered from the pit, and of this deliverance he gives God the glory; "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay," (and remember, the clay means our nature, and the mire of that clay is the corruption and sin of our nature, in which David sunk and stuck fast, being detained in the pit by his sin,) "and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." This rock means Christ; and his feet being set upon this rock, means that

his faith or confidence was fixed in Christ. When he was thus by faith founded upon this rock, then his goings were established. Instead of walking in infidelity, he walked in faith; instead of sin, he walked in pardon; instead of bondage, he walked in liberty; instead of the curse, he walked in the blessing of life; instead of wrath, he walked in God's love; and so, when brought to believe in Christ, his goings were sweetly established; and, when thus established, then the Lord put a new song in his mouth, even praise unto our God. It was a new song, because this was his first deliverance from guilt and wrath; and it was a song of praise, because his salvation was free and unmerited, and because the love of God in his heart was the root from whence it sprung; read Psalm xl. 1—3. Thus David was delivered just in the same way as we have been, and as all God's children are.

Your burden went off the right way, depend upon it, by the blessed and glorious effects that followed. Your heart was purified by faith in the Saviour's blood; peace flowed in upon it; all accusers were silenced as his perfect righteousness was put on; for the work of this is peace, and the effect of it quietness and assurance for ever. It delivers from all condemnation, and gives us a right and title to the kingdom of heaven. Whom God justifies, them he will also glorify; for at death there will be this order issued, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which

keepeth the truth may enter in," Isai. xxvi. 2. This will do; this righteousness is all-sufficient; we want no other; for he was perfect God and perfect man in one person that wrought it out and brought it in; therefore it is everlastingly efficacious to deliver his children from all condemnation, and to give them an abundant entrance into heaven at last.

In one part of your letter I must remark, that I cannot find that harmony I could wish. We agree in heart, I am sure; but I find a difficulty in getting at your meaning. After admiring the pardoning love of God towards you in Christ Jesus, and setting forth his perfection, and that nothing can be added to his happiness, nor taken from it, by any thing done by us, then you proceed thus; "As God is strictly just, without a full recompense for the same, as Christ took upon him that nature that sinned in the garden, he became his people's brother and kinsman according to the flesh; he was in them, and they in him; then his righteousness became their righteousness, and their sins became his sins. When the law found him clothed in flesh, it demanded perfect obedience, and Christ fulfilled its demands, and died upon the cross, and God saw the travail of his soul and was satisfied; and Christ said, "It is finished;" so that every soul who has not an interest in Christ must die eternally, and those that have must live eternally.

"I am far from believing that Christ was in the

transgression. The sin was done and committed by us in the garden before he was clothed with our flesh." That which puzzles me here is, what you mean by these words, "As God is strictly just without a full recompense of the same." By what follows, I understand that your meaning is—That God is strictly just in saving and pardoning sinners without receiving any recompense or satisfaction from them, having got full and perfect satisfaction from Christ their surety.—This I believe to be your meaning; otherwise God has declared, that he will by no means clear the guilty without a full satisfaction; and, as he has said this, so he cannot be just and true to his word without a perfect obedience to the law, and without a full and perfect satisfaction to justice. But, as Christ has obeyed the law, both in precept and penalty, and given justice a full and complete satisfaction, so all that are brought to believe in him are delivered from all condemnation, upon the footing of the strictest justice; for God is just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly that are brought to believe in Christ; and he is only merciful because he is strictly just. Thus have I expressed your meaning I believe.

What follows is a statement of justification before God, as this passage expresses it. "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. Here we see the doctrine of the imputation, both of sin and righteous-

ness. The Son of God having undertaken to be his people's surety from all eternity, a body was prepared to be assumed in time, that so, the Godhead and manhood being united in one person, a proper mediator might appear; for as sin entered all the human race became corrupted; all were enemies to God, and reconciliation could never more be brought about without satisfaction both to law and justice. And, that Christ's human nature might be preserved pure and free from all sin, it was not brought forth by natural generation, but produced in the virgin's womb under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and thereby preserved perfectly holy; and, when formed in the womb, then the union between the two natures took place; for the human nature never had personal existence, as that would make two persons in our Saviour, which is confusion. As the two perfect natures were united in the virgin's womb, so, as soon as Christ was born, he is declared to be the Son of God, because of the human nature being united to the divine person of the Son of God; and by this union of God and man in one person a suitable redeemer, saviour, and mediator, was manifested; for, as perfect man, he could yield a perfect obedience to the precepts of the law, and could suffer and endure the death that we had incurred; and what the human nature did, the divine stamped an infinite dignity upon, and so made his obedience perfectly meritorious. And none but Christ could be a proper saviour; for, if

he was no more than perfect man, he could not merit; and, if he was God only, he could not suffer; but, being both God and man in one person, he could both obey and merit, and so reconcile God to sinners, and sinners to God. As mediator, Christ was set up from everlasting in the purpose of God, and undertook to redeem those chosen in him, and given to him by his Father; and, upon the footing of this his everlasting undertaking, all the Old Testament saints were pardoned. He undertook to remove all the sins of the elect, which were placed to his account, or imputed to him as their surety; and so, when he actually became incarnate, on the eighth day he was circumcised, which put him into his people's law place, to answer every demand both of law and justice for them. And, as all the sins of the elect were imputed to him, (for the Lord caused to meet upon him the iniquity of us all), so the righteousness he wrought out and brought in is imputed to them; he took their sin by free imputation, and they receive his righteousness by free imputation also; and this one only righteousness of Christ is the sole cause of their justification, which faith apprehends and puts on. As by the disobedience of one, and by one disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, and by one obedience, shall many be made righteous, Rom. v. 19. So that we are not justified by any inherent righteousness wrought in us, but by Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to us; and

the worth and value of this righteousness springs from this, that he who wrought it out and brought it in was God as well as man. Give up the divinity of Christ, and then I will insist upon it, in the name of God, that every soul must perish. I know, and am sure of it, glory be to his precious name, that he is God over all, and for ever blessed, though also bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, Eph. v. 30—32. Heb. ii. 14. “For he hath made him to be sin for us (by imputation), who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” (by imputation also,) 2 Cor. v. 21. Meditate upon this precious passage. So far we agree, I am fully persuaded.

Again you say, “I am far from believing that Christ was in the transgression; the sin was done and committed by us in the garden before he became incarnate.” This is not clearly worded; but your meaning I understand to be this—that Christ was entirely free from all sin, and had none of his own. This is clear; for, if he had not been holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, he could not have been our Saviour; he could have been no saviour at all. The sins that he bore, which were the cause of his dreadful agony and sufferings in the garden and upon the cross, were all the sins that had been committed by his people, and also those that should be committed after his incarnation to the end of time; and, when he bowed his head upon the cross, saying, “It is finished,” the whole score was then atoned for.

“For by (his) one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” Heb. x. 14; “and thereby became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him,” Heb. v. 9. “Having obtained eternal redemption for us,” Heb. ix. 12. And, as he died to redeem all the elect of God under both testaments, it was thus accomplished; for, as he died for our sins, so he rose again for our justification; and this resurrection from the grave insures the salvation of all those for whom he died; and his finished salvation, in the fulness of time, in its efficacy, extended from the creation to the end of the world. “Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God,” Rom. iii. 24, 25. “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were (committed) under the first testament, they which are called (to the knowledge and fellowship of Christ under the new) might receive the promise of eternal inheritance,” Heb. ix. 15.

Further, you say, “Even in the solemn act of prayer all God’s chosen people stand in need of pardon, and Christ is exalted as a prince and a saviour, to perfume their prayers, and as their forerunner to appear in the presence of God for them.”

Yes, my dear friend, our prayers seldom please ourselves, and therefore could never be acceptable to, or prevalent with God, were they not put up in the name of Christ, and rendered efficacious by being perfumed with the much incense of his merit, Rev. viii. 3, 4. He is our everliving intercessor, our advocate with the Father, which we know by the many pleas he has thrown into our consciences, that have been sufficient to silence the accusations of every enemy. His merits are always sufficient to procure and secure to us every needful blessing; for, if we draw near at a throne of grace under a sense of want, pleading his merits, the precious promises that are yea and amen in him, and only expecting an answer and a supply for his sake, we are sure to succeed, seeing we are to call upon God for all the things of which we feel our need; and, having so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, "Shall he not with him also freely give us all things? for no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." And, that we may be enabled to pray in faith, and according to the will of God, he blesses us with the Spirit of grace and supplication, otherwise we could neither feel our wants, nor know what to pray for as we ought. And how does this blessed Spirit at times bring home the promises, enlarge our hearts, and equip us with such life, power and energy, that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force?" Matt. xi. 12. And because of

this Spirit of prayer it is that Zion, or the church of God, is said to be "terrible as an army with banners," Cant. vi. 4.

But the comforts that you once enjoyed are gone, and now you are dishonouring the best of fathers by an evil heart of unbelief. You say, "I wish to acquaint you that at present a very dark cloud surrounds me, so that I cannot pray to the best of beings with that love and reverent awe that I ought to do; and in this darkness I am sometimes tempted to think that my religion is all a delusion, that I have neither part nor lot in the matter, and my rejoicings have only been like that of the stony-ground hearers." I do not believe that a child of God, after he is called by grace, can ever be in the dark again. 'I cannot believe this,' say you; 'for does not the prophet say, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God," Isai. l. 10. The prophet speaks this certainly; but then the person he speaks of is by no means in darkness, in the worst sense of the word; he is neither blinded by the God of this world, in unpardoned guilt, far from God by carnal enmity reigning in his mind, nor shut up in unbelief. The prophet represents a child of God under the hiding of the Lord's countenance, who is a sound believer, being said to have the fear of God in his heart, to yield the obedience of faith, and to have

an interest in God ; “ Let him stay himself upon his God.” Such a person as this is never in the dark in one sense, though he is sometimes in the sense the prophet means, namely, while under the suspension of that light which attends sensible comfort, joy, and peace. Believers are often thus in the dark, and have none of this light, none of the enjoyment of God’s love ; their peace being often interrupted, though they are children of light, even when this is the case ; for, if they do not enjoy comfort, if not joyful, they can see wonderfully into the mystery of iniquity in their own hearts, the cunning craftiness of the adversary, and can clearly discern an empty professor ; and this is the shining of the true light. And, though your comforts are withdrawn, that your faith may be tried, and you are in the dark in this respect, yet you can see yourself full of sin, the workings of the old man, the traps and snares of the adversary, and are not without discernment into the meaning of the scriptures : whereas, if you were in darkness in the worst sense, you could not perceive any of these things. And observe, though you are not comfortable, yet God is your God still, and you are exhorted to stay yourself upon him, and look out and expect fresh visits from him ; for, as sure as he withdraws, so sure he will come again to his people, having loved them with an everlasting love, and therefore will never finally leave nor forsake them.

Yes, but you are tempted to think that your

“rejoicings have only been those of the stony-ground hearer.” Here I purpose dwelling a little. The account we have of such is this; “Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had not root they withered away.” The Saviour’s explanation is this; “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended,” Matt. xiii.

The stony-ground hearer is a hardened, insensible sinner, who never knew the plague of his own heart, was never taught out of God’s law, nor humbled under a sight and sense of his sin, and never knew what a broken and contrite heart meant; for he is said to have no deepness of earth, and therefore the word of God could not take deep root; for, Saint James says, “Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls,” Chap. i. 21. This stony-ground hearer’s profession was taken up suddenly, for as soon as he heard the word, anon with joy he received it; that is, his natural passions were moved by it; and, his natural affections being thus suddenly wrought upon, he felt uncommon joy, and sprung up instantly into a profession, and into the full assurance of faith, without ever feeling his

unbelief, knowing himself to be a cursed, hell-deserving sinner, who had never being quickened to hunger and thirst after righteousness; but, as soon as temptation, persecution, and tribulation came on, directly all his carnal joy withered, and sprung no more. He dropped his profession, went back again into the world, and was no more heard of. This stony-ground hearer represents some of those who followed Christ for the loaves and fishes, who were charmed with the novelty of his preaching and the miracles that he wrought, and therefore became his followers; but, when he came to insist upon heart-work, on eating his flesh and drinking his blood, without which none can have eternal life; when he enforced eternal election, telling them that none could come to him except they were drawn by the Father, &c. immediately all these fell away, and renounced all their profession: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him," John vi. 66. But his real disciples could never thus depart. When Christ asked them, "Will ye also go away?" the answer was, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," John vi. 68. And where the word of truth goes with power, to quicken a dead soul to feel his lost estate, and bring him to hunger and thirst after righteousness, such cannot go back, being "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time," 1 Peter i. 5.

You cannot lay your hand upon your heart, look God in the face, and say that you are one of those stony-ground hearers. No, I know you dare not. Your profession did not begin by being drawn by love, nor did you immediately spring up into joy. No; the Lord first came near to you in judgment, setting your sins in order before you, and in the light of his countenance; he exercised, tried, and disciplined you, by teaching you out of his law. You were suffered long to labour and travail; were burdened; in bondage and misery; endured much hunger and thirst; passed through much buffetting, both of men and devils; he searched your heart, and tried your reins; humbled you under his mighty hand; and brought you, after long labour, as a poor, naked, cursed, and perishing sinner, to Christ, and then granted you a free pardon, a feeling sense of his everlasting love to you in him, godly sorrow and repentance unto life; and the joy that you felt spring from pardoning love, operating in your heart, humbled you in self-loathing, and exalted Christ far above all blessing and praise. But, alas, sir! the joy of the stony-ground hearer was only from his natural and corrupt passions being moved; his joy lifted him up in pride and self-conceit, which never was the fruit of God's love to him: and this joy, having no root in God's everlasting love, it finally withered away. But the joy that springs up in the soul, under the experience of the pardoning love of God, shall never

finally wither: everlasting love is the root of it; wherefore, though it may often be damped, and wither for a time, through the temptations of Satan, the working of inbred corruption, the hiding of the Lord's face, and the suspension of sensible comfort; yet, when love operates, or is enjoyed again, then this joy springs up afresh, for it is a fruit of the Spirit, both the root and the branch. Love is the root that the stony-ground hearer lacked: "Be ye rooted and grounded in love." And this root is kept from dying in us, or finally withering away, because God's everlasting love is the fountain of it; and because his love in Christ is everlasting to us, so our love to him can never finally fail, his being the cause of ours: "We love him because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 10.

Observe the connection between love and joy in these passages:—Of love, Jerem. xxxi. 3; Rom. v. 5; and viii. 39; 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17; Eph. iii. 19; 1 John iv. 8. Of joy, 1 Peter i. 8; Isa. xxxv. 10; li. 11; and lxi. 7; Psalm xvi. 11.

We may, and often do, lose the happy enjoyment of the Lord's love *in* us; but his love *to* us can never be interrupted—it is everlasting; and he loves his children just the same when they are in the furnace of affliction as when filled with joy and peace in believing; nay, a part of his love lies, and is discovered, in scourging, chastising, and rebuking of us. As a loving Father to his children, he often has occasion to use the rod: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he

that loveth him chasteneth him betimes," Prov. xiii. 24. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But, if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons," Heb. xii. 6—8. But the fool's back always calls loudly for stripes before our gracious God and loving Father lays them on. I can tell well enough what the Lord is teaching you; it is, that you may not live upon frames and feelings, nor upon sensible comforts and consolations only; but that you may be kept living upon the fulness of grace that is in Christ Jesus. While you are hugging your comforts, and living upon them, you are a true Quaker and Arminian indeed; because that is living upon a stock in hand, upon what you experience in yourself, as if there was never to be a change; whereas the Lord will make all his children be strong in the grace that is in Christ, and not in the grace that is in themselves; for their brightest enjoyments may wither in an hour; therefore the Lord will bring them to go by prayer to Christ for a daily and continual supply; and hence we have the promise of being strengthened, or renewed in the inward man, day by day, 2 Cor. iv. 16.

When your comforts have been all taken away, and the devil and corruption come in, and spring up like a flood, a few times, then you will begin

to understand the difference between the old man and the new—between that which is born of the flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit. When unbelief works, hardness of heart is felt, the lusts of the flesh begin to move, enmity and rebellion boil up, and inordinate affections crawl forth, you may perceive the old man in motion; and we shall feel him, at times, in all his members as long as we are in this world. But, when faith is in exercise, love enjoyed, contrition of heart felt, liberty experienced, our minds kept in perfect peace, stayed upon God, our thoughts in pleasing captivity to the obedience of Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory felt in our souls, then is the new man strengthened, or renewed; and he stands in need of renewing, in some member or other, every day, as the old man must be mortified, and put off daily. God is about teaching you some wholesome lessons upon this ground, you may be assured; and you must be weaned from living upon comfort. Zion's breasts of consolation must only be enjoyed for a time, while we are babes. Milk, you know, is for such, but strong meat for men; and the Lord has declared that his people shall be fed with knowledge, understanding, and doctrine, (Jer. iii. 15; Isa. xxviii. 9,) as well as milk. He has now put up the breast, withdrawn his comforts and consolations; and you think some strange thing has happened unto you, as you find every corruption, the root of every sin in your heart, and the devil

still alive. When you were first delivered, when the day of your espousals arrived, and you were taken down into the wine cellar, or banquetting house, to have your fill of love, (Cant. ii. 4,) you then thought that the devil and the old man were gone for ever, and that you should never be troubled with them any more. I know you entertained such thoughts; but I suppose now you find them still in being, don't you? 'Yes,' you will say, 'to my sorrow.' Well, these are some of the old inhabitants of the land, that are left to try and to prove Israel, but still to do them good in their latter end. The Lord is pleased, in general, to favour us with much of his love and presence at our first deliverance; which you may call the bounty money at our first coming over to the standard: but, when this is spent or passed through, then we are called to go to war, and engage with the world, the flesh, the devil, heretics and hypocrites; and in this war we must continue Christ's faithful servants and soldiers until our life ends, as the prayer book of the church of England expresses it. When in this actual service the Lord gives us strength equal to our day; and the promise is a penny a day, which we find faithfully performed, for he affords fresh supplies of grace and a little reviving daily, in some way or other; indulging us with a little of the old fare which we had when in the wine cellar; and this encourages and keeps us on in the heavenly race.

The Captain of our salvation is now putting you to drill under two of his drill serjeants—the devil and the old man of sin, who act under the Captain's orders; and, when you have been well exercised by these, then you will know more of a soldier's life, and will be brought to walk and to live by faith upon the Son of God, and so go steadily on in the heavenly race, not tossed to and fro by every change of frames and feelings that you experience, for you will soon find that these changes are needful and profitable for your growth in grace; but that God's love is the same towards you amidst them all, so as not to alter your state in his sight, who still loves you with an everlasting love, whatever may be your exercises. Every grace that the Lord gives us shall be tried, and we must not be surprised at finding continual changes in us, it being needful that they should take place. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you; knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world," 1 Peter iv. 12, and v. 9. But I proceed.

You say, "But now my love has withdrawn himself, and I know not where to find him; my harp is hung upon the willow tree, and has lost its pleasant sound." Yes, this is the way of our dearly Beloved; and he does it that the affections of his spouse may be tried, and proved to her

own, not for his satisfaction, to be genuine: "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour," Isa. xlv. 15. He is only turned aside for a season, and not lost; for he will surely come again, and by his absence his presence will be more highly prized. Precious things, by constant use, lose, in our esteem, much of their intrinsic value; but, when they are only occasionally used, then we are much more sensible of their real worth: so, by a long indulgence of uncommon prosperity, the soul begins to grow rather proud of its attainments; lives and depends too much upon the experience of grace in exercise in the heart, instead of growing up into Christ, and that in all things, and being strong in the grace that is in him; and cannot condescend to those of low degree in the family. And, when the best Beloved sees this, he withdraws himself, that we may know all that is in our heart, and what we are without him. And when the good man thus takes a journey, and the bag of money with him, or strips us of all our comforts, then by the loss we become better acquainted with their worth; and, when we have long sought after him, and he is pleased to manifest himself afresh, then he appears ten thousand times more precious than ever, and the harp is taken from the willow tree, and strikes up its pleasing sound again; for he turns our mourning into dancing, puts off our sackcloth, and girds us with gladness, to the end that our tongue, which

is our glory, may sing his praise, and not be silent, Psalm xxx. 11, 12. There is a necessity for these things.

But you say, "I know not where to find him?" He is to be found in searching the scriptures; "Search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Oftentimes in meditation, among private believers, and in the public means of God's appointment, he is to be found by constant prayer; for, if we seek after him thus, we are sure to succeed; and I will tell you one very good plan when he appears shy, which is this—encircle him with his own promises; and, when you have thus brought him near, then desire him to look at them, appealing to him that they are all his own; then put him in mind that his name is faithful and true; and, if you do but keep close to him thus, as God liveth, he cannot long delay; as we see by the church in the Song; she proceeded thus, till at last he was obliged to give her this answer; "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me," Cant. vi. 5. Then he came into his garden, and ate his pleasant fruits, or was entertained and delighted with the exercise of his own grace upon himself. We have another account in the Song of the church when under the hiding of the Lord's face, which she calls night; saying, "By night on my bed [she was got into carnal ease and security] I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I

found him not;" [that is, she felt for him in her conscience, mind, heart and affections, but could not find him present with her, therefore she set off to try other means.] "I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets [i. e. she went and conversed with private believers about him], and in the broad ways, [i. e. in the public ordinances of his house]." She sought after him, but still he kept at a distance; then she inquired of the watchmen concerning him; "The watchmen that go about the city found me; to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" These watchmen were ministers, who go about in the city of Zion preaching the word of God's grace. And very soon after she had been with them he visited her again; "It was but a little that I passed from them but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me," Song iii. 1—4. Her faith, after her diligent search, was so drawn forth into exercise, and so wrought by love to her Saviour, that she sensibly brought him into her heart and affections, and enjoyed his soul-satisfying presence again. When he withdraws his presence from us we must go the same way to work as the church did. But O, what God-dishonouring creatures are we, when left to ourselves to feel the working of corruptions, and the fiery darts of the wicked one! We are oftentimes led to call the work of God upon us in question; ready to believe and set

in with every suggestion, if it be but against God and our own soul's comfort; and of this complaint is made, "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, saying, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint," Isa. xl. 27—31.

When the Lord left David, and hid his face, he fretted, and his unbelieving heart led him to talk just as you do; "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah." What a production of unbelief is here! and he was brought to confess it as evil; "And I said, this is my infirmity," Psalm lxxvii. And only mind how faith and infidelity speak alternately, which shews the company of two armies in the church of God, Cant. vi. 13. "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Christ answers her thus; "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should

not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee." And, to silence all her unbelief, he directs her to his dying and redeeming love; "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me," Isai. xlix. 14—16. Another good man declared, in his trouble, that he should see God no more in the land of the living,—that as a lion would break all his bones; and make an end of him; but, if you read on, he was mistaken, Isaiah xxxviii. Another said in his haste, when some endeavoured to comfort him, "All men are liars," Psalm cxvi. 11. Jeremiah went so far as to call God a liar, "Wilt thou be altogether as a liar unto me, and as the waters that fail?" chap. xv. 18. Jonah declared to the Most High himself, that he did well to be angry even unto death, chap. iv. 9. Job, that he should go to the land of darkness without either form or order, chap. x. 22. O the long-suffering mercy of God, that ever he should permit such rebellious wretches to live! But he passes all by for his dear Son's sake, and even receives us graciously, and manifests his love to us again, when we are enabled to take words with us, and turn to him with confession and prayer. And, "although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him," Job xxxv. 14.

He will bring thee forth again to the light, and will be as the dew unto Israel; they shall re-

vive, as the corn, grow as the vine, shall strike deeper root into God's everlasting love, and bring forth fruit to his glory and praise; his branches shall spread, his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon—the smell of a field which God hath blessed; read Hosea iv. and Gen. xxvii. 27. Zion shall never be moved. Upon Christ the rock God hath founded thee, and the gates of hell, neither Satan, sin, or death, shall ever prevail against thee. Say with David, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Psalm xlii. 5, and cxvi. 7. We have the Lord's covenant, his promise and oath, the finished work of Christ, the Spirit's work upon our hearts, and the faithfulness and truth of God to secure us in our standing; which is the strongest consolation that the heirs of promise can have, for God must cease to be God before any of the elect can perish; "My sheep," says Christ, "hear my voice, and I know them; and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "Fear not," William, for "thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name." Thou art one with Christ, the true and living vine; a fruitful branch in him; and by trials, temptations, and the hidings of his face, God the Father, the heavenly husbandman, is

purging thee, that thou mayest bring forth more fruit; no purging, no fruit; "Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him." It is a proof that he loves thee, for such as have no chastisements are bastards, and not sons. It is now the day of adversity, therefore consider God's work, and wait with patience. The next will be the day of prosperity, and when that comes thou wilt be joyful, and as long as thou art in this world thou wilt find the one set in opposition to the other. Your religion is no delusion; if it was, the devil would not tell you of it. If you read my first letter again, with this thought in view, perhaps you will understand it better than you did when it was first received.

But you know I promised to compare notes with you, and I will endeavour to be as good as my word; though, if I were now to give you that part of my experience which agrees with your own, the adversary and unbelief might prevail with you to think that it was done just to please you, without any foundation in truth, and on purpose to bring you to rest upon the testimony of man, instead of the testimony and power of God; therefore, to prevent your being harassed this way (for I am not altogether ignorant of Satan's devices), I will send you the copy of a letter that I wrote to Mr. Huntington some years ago, when it was impressed strongly upon my mind to give him an account of the dealings of God with my soul, and to join the church at Providence chapel; and

the passage that dwelt constantly with me till I did so was this, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things," Gal. vi. 6. By this you will see how the same God hath taught us, and that the same anointing hath been communicated to us. Your first letter fully persuaded me that our way in some things agreed, and the second confirmed it. But whether you will be so convinced or not, I submit to God and your own conscience.

To the Rev. W. Huntington.

Dearly beloved and honoured Father in Christ Jesus,

As such I shall ever esteem you ; for through your instrumentality alone it is that the Lord has been pleased to beget me to a lively hope that I shall never perish, but have everlasting life, and be found a member of Christ's mystical body when time shall be no more. You have long been made manifest in my heart and conscience as a servant of the Lord, and the doctrines you preach as the only true doctrines of the gospel, being the very same that the apostles and prophets taught in the days of old ; laying Christ Jesus, and him crucified, as the only foundation for poor sinners to build all their hopes and expectations of complete salvation and everlasting glory upon. I have no more doubt of the word of the Lord in your mouth being truth, than I have of my personal existence,

because it hath come with power to my heart, and by it the Lord hath effected a wonderful change. I will now endeavour, as God shall enable me, to give you some little account of myself; the way that I have come; and of the Lord's dealings with my soul. Though the Lord has been pleased, in a measure, to make darkness light before me, and crooked things straight, yet I am still a mystery and a wonder to myself. You have, times without number, pointed out my case and experience, and told me where I was, and that in such a manner as I never could do myself. There is scarcely a thought that ever passed through my mind, neither is there a work ever done by me in secret, but you have been enabled to explain and make manifest. I have many times stood astonished, that you should have such knowledge of me, of my past life, and of the way wherein I have been led. This for a good while puzzled me much; but now, blessed be God, I know that it is he (and not you) who searcheth the heart and tries the reins of the children of men; that it is he who sets a man's sins in order before him, and lets him know what are his thoughts; for, upon examining the matter, I found that you could know nothing of me, because I never spoke to you in my life, neither did I ever open my case and state to any man living; therefore this must be the Lord's doing, because he declares, "I the Lord search the heart and try the reins." And, consequently, the excellency of the power must be

alone of him, and not of his servant. But to proceed.—

I was born in a village called Lazonby, situated upon the banks of the river Eden, in the county of Cumberland, about fifteen miles from the city of Carlisle, and seven from the market town of Penrith; there I went to school, and continued until I was more than twelve years of age, when I was put apprentice to a linen-draper at Penrith for four years and a half; at the expiration of which time it pleased the Lord to bring me to London, for which I desire to bless his name. I would here stop, look back, and take a view of my past life, and ask myself this question—‘Is there any thing good in it?’ No, nothing at all: all evil, only evil, and that continually; it was one continued blot, one continued state of rebellion and enmity against the Most High. I may truly say, with David, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” And again, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” I think, if ever a poor creature served the devil faithfully, and with full purpose of heart, I was the man; for “destruction and misery were in all my ways, and the way of peace I never knew.” In sin and wickedness I exceeded most of my fellows. The Lord was pleased now and then to bring me to books; and conscience has frequently made terrible work within; but, when he began to lay about him with violence, then I would get

into the world, and amongst my old wicked companions again, in order to silence him. And further, I would now and then resolve, when matters got very bad, that, if the Lord would be pleased to forgive me that time, I never would do so any more. And in this way I have often bound myself in such a manner as is too shocking to mention. In vowing, resolving, and striving against sin in my own strength, I continued for four years, and particularly against one besetting sin; but all in vain: for, as the Lord liveth, I never abode by one resolution, nor kept one vow that ever I made, but broke through them all. The devil and sin were both stronger than I; and I should have been a slave and a drudge to them unto this day, had not the Lord been pleased, with his right hand and stretched out arm, to get himself the victory.

I was brought up to the church of England; and, according to the doctrine that I heard there preached, could have no hope of being saved; though I thought the fault lay in me, and not in the doctrine, which was salvation by works. Those who lived a holy, good, and righteous life, were to be saved; whilst, on the contrary, those that lived in sin and wickedness would perish; which I thought was certainly right, and as it should be. My only comfort was this—though I was certainly a sinner, and a great one; yet there being some as bad or worse than myself, and God being a merciful God, I thought I should fare as

well as they. But alas! when it pleased God to bring me under your faithful and honest dealing, this refuge, like all others, were made manifest as only refuges of lies, and they were all presently and effectually swept away. When I first came to London I was at an uncle's in James Street, Covent Garden, for a about a month. The first Sunday after I came he took me to Orange Street chapel, to hear the word preached: the next Sunday another uncle took me to Providence chapel to hear you. But my going was only to oblige my friends, for I had not the least intention of hearing to profit, having received a particular charge, before I came to town, to have nothing to do with the Methodists, unless it were to go now and then, if asked, rather than give offence to my relations, who are many of them in that profession.

I shall not tell you all that I thought when I first heard you preach; but nothing good you may be sure. I understood no more what you said than if you had preached in Greek or Hebrew; and could not help being astonished at my ignorance; or, to say the truth, at what I thought to be your foolishness; and yet, on looking round among the people, I had never seen such a congregation before; for, instead of looking about them, or falling asleep, they appeared to be all eyes and ears, giving particular attention, and taking heed to the things that were spoken. The third time I went to hear you I took a ticket, in-

tending to come occasionally ; and, glory be to the Lord's rich grace, he soon applied his word with such power to my heart, that I could not stay away. If I went (as I often did) to hear any other preacher, my heart and soul would be with you ; though absent in body, yet present in spirit ; the Lord clearly fulfilling this scripture in my experience, " As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me ; the strangers shall submit themselves unto me." And thus, by hearing of the word, he was pleased to quicken my dead soul to feel, and enlighten my blind eyes to see, the true state I was in. He caused such an earthquake to be experienced in my conscience, and such a resurrection among my sins, that they were all (from my very childhood) set in order before me : many old sins, which I thought were dead and buried, and would no more appear against me, shewed themselves, and conscience bore witness that they were all mine. The law I found to be holy, and to admit of no failure, whilst I was unholy, and full of sin. I used to think none but outward acts were sins, but now I saw sin in the desires and thoughts of the heart. All those who look for salvation by the works of the law must bring a perfect and uninterrupted obedience, not in deed only, but in thought, word, and deed, because the law allows of no failure : it puts the soul under the curse and sentence of death for the least sin of omission or commission ; therefore, by the deeds of the law, it is evident, none can ever

be justified. As I had broken every precept of the moral law in thought, word, or deed, I believed that what the Lord has threatened transgressors with would unavoidably be executed upon me; and these two texts stood against me, and were sadly in my way, until it pleased the Lord to shew me that they were both fulfilled for me by Christ's life and death; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." 'Then I have broken every precept, and am therefore the man here spoken of, consequently under the curse of God.' The other text was, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." 'Well, I have sinned, therefore I am the man. These are the words of the immutable and unchangeable God, wherefore there can be nothing but death eternal for me.'

These things, working in my heart, alarmed and terrified me greatly. I began to wish that I had been in my old dead state, as it was then better with me than now. I believed that God could not save me, but that I must perish according to his word. These things caused slavish and servile fear to work. Death and judgment tormented me; and the sin and guilt upon my conscience I soon found to be a load and burden too heavy for me to bear. The Lord appeared to me in his law, as he did to Balaam, with his drawn sword in his hand, as an angry judge and a consuming fire; and so he would at this day, was the dear Redeemer taken out of sight; for he has revealed

and made manifest no way wherein he can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly, but through his dear Son. At this time it was that the Lord was pleased, by his Spirit, to teach me to pray. I was obliged to throw away my daily form of prayers, and, with the poor publican in the temple, to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" With the jailor, "What must I do to be saved?" And with Peter, "Lord, save, or I perish!" My prayers now were such as these, which came from a miserable heart; and I never till then knew what it was to pray; for it is one thing to say prayers, and another to pray indeed: the one being only from the mouth, the other springing from a feeling sense of want in the heart. My old ways of sin were now effectually hedged up with thorns, so that I could not find my former paths. Destruction appeared on every side, without any way of escape, for some time; but at last it pleased the Lord, in this valley of Achor, to open unto me a door of hope. When the Lord had effectually convinced me that I had nothing, and could do nothing in any wise to merit his favour, or contribute towards my own salvation, either in whole or in part, and that I was fearfully and totally fallen; that every faculty of my soul was out of order, and that my heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; that I could not recover myself, by any power of my own, from the absolute dominion of sin, the curse of the law, the wrath revealed therein, and the tyranny

of the devil; then he was pleased to set before me his dearly beloved Son, as the only refuge from all these things, and as the sinner's all-sufficient surety.

I remember a time when you insisted upon it that Christ saved none but sensible sinners, and produced this passage to confirm it, which was spoken by the Lord himself, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." I never heard such news in this world before, neither could I believe it at the time. 'Surely,' said I, 'he must be mistaken; but, should he not, God knows I am a sinner bad enough, and vile enough, and therefore who can tell (if it be true) but he may save me! When I got home I set to work, like the noble Bereans of old, to examine the word, to see whether these things were so or not; when, lo and behold! it was just as you had represented. Now a hope sprung up of better times, and from thence the Bible and I came together; and blessed be God for such a meeting, it being now my study, meditation, and soul's delight. And oh! what comfort did such texts as these bring to my poor soul! They poured in so fast, that before one had well delivered it's joyful tidings there was another, like Job's messengers, one upon the heels of another. "They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." "Fear not, like flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the

gift of God." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such passages as these were running in my mind from morning till night; yea, from week's end to week's end; and, examining the word to see who and what sort of persons had been saved, to my astonishment I found Mary Magdalen, Manasseh, Paul, &c. which caused my hope and expectation to increase exceedingly. In process of time the Lord was pleased, now a little and then a little, to enlighten me into the doctrines of the gospel as preached by you, and I had not a single doubt but what you said was true. He shewed me how that, in his dearly beloved Son, he could save all those that believe in him, though the worst of sinners, and still be true to his law and threatenings; that he was just the Saviour I wanted, suitable in all points; and he convinced me that out of him I must perish and be damned, there being no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must or can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ; and that by faith in his blood and righteousness alone it is that we are justified freely from all things, and in no other sense.

Imputed righteousness was the first doctrine of the gospel that the Lord was pleased to reveal and apply with power to my heart. He

shewed me how his dear Son was made sin for us (by imputation, having all the sins of the elect placed to his account), who knew no sin; and this was done that, by the imputation of his righteousness (consisting both of his active and passive obedience), we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And in him God the Father is well pleased with his people; but then it is only and entirely on account of his righteousness, and not for any thing in them; for, was he extreme to mark iniquity in the very best of their works, there could be no standing in judgment before him; therefore, take away the imputed righteousness of the dear Redeemer, and every one must stand to his own account, and answer for all his sins; the consequence of which must be everlasting destruction and endless wo!

Soon after this the precious Jesus was set before me in all his beauty and glory, as an able and all-sufficient Saviour, and as the only hiding place from the storm and covert from the tempest; but, though I had no doubt of his being so to others, this would not do for me—I must know whether I had any part or lot in him myself. I had not a single doubt but all that believed in him as their Saviour, and put their trust in him as such, would certainly be finally and eternally saved; yet I found myself shut up in unbelief, suggesting, 'He cannot belong to me: I can never believe that he veiled the glory of his divine nature in a ta-

bernacle of flesh and blood, and became Emanuel, God with us, to save such a monstrous sinner as myself.' In which my old master confirmed me as strongly as he could, representing it as impossible, and the very height of presumption to indulge such a thought. I found my want of faith; I found also that the Lord had promised to give it, and to work it in the hearts of his people by the operation of his Spirit. My prayer to him therefore was, to fulfil his promise; to give me faith; to work a firm persuasion in my mind that Jesus Christ was mine; that I had an interest in him; and that all that he did and suffered was to work out and bring in an everlasting righteousness to justify *me*. This for a long time I sought after, and, blessed be God, not in vain; for about three years ago I had a comfortable persuasion that Christ was mine; that he was my Surety; that he had paid all my debts, and that his precious blood was shed to wash away my sins. This faith came to me by hearing the word preached; and upon thus believing and receiving him into my heart I experienced unutterable rest and peace, and such a manifestation of pardoning love as caused me to rejoice with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory; and, with Zion of old, I could say, that, when the Lord was pleased thus to turn my captivity, I was like them that dream. And from that time the Lord appeared to me as a loving, kind, and tender Father in Jesus Christ, and completely reconciled and well

pleased with me in him. Jesus Christ came into my heart and affections as the chiefest among ten thousand, yea, the altogether lovely; and I had no doubt of being one of his people.

These precious visitations lasted with me for some months, during which time I had a very heaven upon earth; joy and gladness were found in my heart, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. I came from the house of God oftentimes with scarcely a thought out of heaven, rejoicing in Jesus Christ as the God of my salvation. Instead of the law cursing and condemning me for disobedience when I read it, as it used to do, there was Christ at the end of it for righteousness to me. Instead of conscience cursing and condemning, there was a sweet peace, the blood of Jesus speaking better things than that of Abel. Instead of the devil accusing and condemning me for sin, he was silenced, and my guilt was gone. Instead of slavish and servile fear of death working in my heart, perfect love kept that out. Instead of God the Father appearing an angry judge and a consuming fire in his law, as he used to do, there was nothing now but love in the altogether lovely Jesus: and this experience is what I am sure will make the stubborn and flinty heart give way. For when, on the one hand, I looked at myself, and saw that I had been the most unworthy, and the very last that ever could have looked for or expected salvation; and, on the other hand, the great goodness and love of Jesus in dying for

such a wretch, and shedding abroad his redeeming love in such a heart as mine; the sight caused me to abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes, and to cry out, 'Grace! Grace!' saying, "To thy name, O Lord, be all the glory and praise."

I never before had such living as this; but, alas! these things left me again, and the devil was more violent than ever: he was sure that it was all a delusion; that he should have me again; that I was his child, and should never be saved, but must perish at last. He got me to look within at myself; when, perceiving my corruption, the many evil thoughts that passed through my mind, the unholy desires and filthy lusts that were moving within; a sight of these things caused unbelief to work, which brought in slavish fear, and a long train of doubts, that were followed by tormenting thoughts; and thus the devil disturbed my peace, and I drew many grievous conclusions that I could not surely be one of the Lord's elect; and oftentimes was ready to give all up for lost, thinking I never should be able either to hold on or hold out, but should one day perish in my own corruptions. Yet now and then the Lord would be pleased to send me such a heavenly discourse, and silence all my doubts and fears in such a manner with a sense of his love, that I really believed him to be my reconciled Father still, and Jesus Christ to be my Saviour. Then again unbelief, doubts and fears would make

such head against me, as to bring all my former experience in question.

In this manner I lived for a long time a life of as complete chequer-work as ever any one did, deciding upon my state according to my frames and feelings, as if the Lord changed as often as they did. But now I am persuaded that he loved me from everlasting in his dearly beloved Son, otherwise he never would have shed abroad his love in my heart in time: and, as he has thus been pleased to give me a taste of it, so I believe that this his lovingkindness shall never be taken away from me, neither shall his faithfulness and truth in the promise ever be permitted to fail. As he was pleased to choose his people freely, without any thing in them to merit his favour, so he will save them in Christ Jesus freely, with an everlasting salvation; and that he will give them not only grace here, but glory hereafter; that not one of them shall ever perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands; that they shall persevere in the Lord's strength, and not one ever totally and finally fall away; that, Jesus Christ being their head and husband, and they the purchase of his blood, his portion, and his hire, he will never lose one, but will raise them all up at the last day, so that not a hoof shall be left behind. And, furthermore, being all secured by the bond of an everlasting covenant, and the everlasting love of Father, Son, and Spirit, the threefold cord which cannot be broken, they must of conse-

quence be saved, and brought safe home to glory; otherwise this cord would be broken, and the covenant agreement between the ever blessed Trinity be null and void. All that Christ died for must be saved, and none else can be, because there is salvation in no other. Though the Lord is pleased to will a thousand changes in us, yet he remains the unchangeable Jehovah—the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; he rests in his love to his people; and here it is that my poor soul finds, and ever desires to find, rest.

I have lately had such a revival of the work of grace upon my soul, and sermon after sermon has come with such a comforting and establishing power, as to silence all my doubts and fears; the ever blessed Spirit bearing witness in my heart and conscience that my record is on high. He hath also condescended to shine upon my path in such a manner as to enable me clearly to see that it was him, and him alone, that hath been with me from my mother's womb; that he has directed all my steps, and that he hath fixed the bounds of my habitation: and I may truly say, to the honour of his ever blessed name, that it was he who preserved me in Christ Jesus through all my sin and wickedness unto a future calling. Sparing and long-suffering mercy hath followed me all my days; and, though the time has been when I never expected to be saved, yet now I know, and am sure, that Jesus Christ doth receive sinners, and that he eateth with them still. And this I ever

will insist upon, as long as I live in the world, that of all sinners I am the very chief, and the very last that ever could have expected salvation; that it is by the free, sovereign, unmerited, unlooked for, undeserved, and unexpected grace of God, that I am what I am; that it is by the same grace I have been enabled to continue unto this very day; that the same Almighty Power who began the work at first, and turned my heart from the love of sin to the love of God, hath kept me hitherto; and I am fully persuaded that he will keep me, through faith in Christ Jesus, still on in the way, until at last I shall receive the end of my faith, even the everlasting salvation of my soul, when faith shall be turned into sight, and hope into full enjoyment; old things are passed away with me, and, behold, all things are become new; for the very works, ways, and pursuits, I once delighted in, practised, and followed, I do now flee from, abhor, and detest. Jesus Christ is all in all in my heart; and I can appeal to him, as the self-existent Jehovah and the omniscient God, with Peter of old, and say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," and that above every other object. Again; I am sure I can come up to John's standard, "We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren:" for in my heart I sincerely love all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, and do esteem them the only excellent of the earth.

Other lords have had dominion over me, and reigned and ruled in me, and would have reigned until this day, had I been left to myself; but now I desire no other king but Jesus to reign and rule in my heart, and to make mention of no other righteousness but his, and his only. Nevertheless I think there is no heart more pestered with unbelief than mine; having daily abundant reason to say, with the disciples of old, "Lord, increase my faith!" The promise is, grace shall reign, sin shall not have dominion; and, to the honour of the Lord's blessed name, I can say that hitherto this hath been fulfilled in me; for, though sin hath reigned and exceedingly abounded in me, yet free grace hath much more abounded. I find the old man and the new working in me, and keeping up a continual warfare; but the promise is, "The elder shall serve the younger;" and I believe it ever shall be so, according to the word of the Lord.

My reasons for sending you this account are principally two: the one is that of the apostle, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." The other is this—I have long had a desire to join you externally, though internally I have been in union with you for years; but, being very timid and shy, I have deferred making known my desire until now; and, being afraid that, through the deceitfulness of my unbelieving heart, and the corruption of my nature, I should one day fall, I

thought I had better fall alone than bring any scandal upon the people of God. But, having had many comfortable visits lately, and many tokens for good, my desire is increased, so that I cannot help making it known, as I would wish to wait upon Christ in all the means of his appointment with full purpose of heart, neglecting none, expecting to find his promised presence in them, and to receive the promised blessings by them. I know that all means in themselves are dry, barren, and empty, except the Lord is pleased thereby to communicate grace to his people, and to bless them to our edification and comfort, working every saving grace in us, and applying every truth essential to salvation with power to our hearts through his appointed means. But, as he has been pleased to circumcise my heart to love him, his people, and his ways, and to close in with Jesus Christ, and him crucified, as my Saviour; so it is the desire of my soul to live to his glory and praise, to keep pressing forward, resting in no present attainment, but pursuing the good old way, in company with that part of his army over which he has made you his under captain and leader, towards that great and glorious recompense of reward, eternal rest in glory, which he has promised to give to all his chosen people.

I would desire to bless God for ever for bringing me under your ministry; for opening my blind eyes to see how I had been led on by blind watchmen, and for enlightening me to dis-

cern, and bringing me in any measure to the knowledge of, the truth as it is in Jesus, and for opening my heart so as to receive the truth in the love of it; and, above all, for not suffering me to stumble at the divinity of Jesus Christ, as it is upon this the efficacy of every doctrine of the gospel rests: destroy this, and make him no more than a creature, or any thing less than the self-existent, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent Jehovah, and the one supreme God, with the Father and the Spirit, and then I am sure there can be no salvation, but all must perish and be lost! And I will insist upon this as long as I live in this world—that, was he not in my heart and affections very and truly a divine and self-existent person, and possessed of every attribute and perfection of deity, no one could preach any gospel, no one could publish any good news, no one could proclaim any glad tidings, or bring any joyful message to my soul. For, supposing him to be a man, as he truly was, and to be perfectly holy, even as holy as the law; and supposing him to have kept it in all points, so as never, in thought, word, or deed, to have deviated therefrom; yet what would all that be to me? Nothing at all. A man's righteousness may profit himself; but then there is nothing for me, his poor neighbour; he has nothing to boast of, he has done that which was commanded him to do, and no more; as our dear Saviour beautifully sets forth in Luke xvii.

by the master and the servant, and then applies it to his disciples, saying, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do." Wo then to that person whose faith and hope of everlasting life, and blessedness in heaven, are not built upon Immanuel, God with us! As man, he obeyed and suffered; as God, he merited; and as God-man, two perfect natures in the unity of the one person of Christ, he wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, which is the one, only, and alone righteousness that can justify a sinner from all things, and present him faultless before the throne in the day of judgment. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." But, if you destroy this union of the two natures in the person of Christ, then none can appear righteous; no, not one. O! that you may ever continue to defend this sure foundation of the Christian religion, and insist upon the need and necessity of being firmly fixed and established in the faith of it, in order to our being saved. The Lord was pleased to cause you to dwell much upon it some time back; and, blessed be his precious name, I received great benefit and establishment from it. Take away this, and you take away all; there is nothing else worth having; all must die in their sins; "for, if ye believe not that I

am,' says the Saviour, "ye shall die in your sins;" the consequence of which must be certain destruction, because the unrighteous shall not enter the kingdom of God; and by the law there is none righteous, no, not one. I have, through rich grace, been enabled to receive Jesus Christ into my heart as a divine persop, as an object of divine worship, and, to all intents and purposes, as God over all and for ever blessed; and as I have received him, so it is the desire of my soul to walk in him, for nothing short of a divine person can save me, being a sinner. If the devil can but entangle and keep a poor sinner short of this, he is sure of his prey; and, if rich, free, sovereign grace prevent not, such must fall into the pit of destruction.

I hope you will pardon this long and imperfect epistle, placing all that is amiss to my account; and, if any thing consistent with the truth, to the Lord's name be all the glory and praise. That you may long be preserved amongst us, and still continue to shine brighter and brighter in the Lord's light—That you may ever stand fast in his counsel, and shun not to declare the whole of it as revealed, faithfully, fully, and freely, and without reserve—That you may ever continue to stand as an iron pillar and a brazen wall in the defence of the gospel—That you may yet be instrumental in turning many sinners from the error of their ways to the wisdom of the just, even to Christ Jesus;

has been, is now, and ever shall be, the sincere and fervent prayer of

Your truly affectionate, though unworthy

Son in the faith of Christ Jesus,

C. G.

P. S. I don't know that I should have mustered up courage sufficient to send this yet, had it not been for the masterly exposition and explanation of, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," last Sunday evening. Blessed be the Lord for evermore, I followed you step by step, and came away from his presence rejoicing in my interest in Jesus Christ, calling all the sermon my own. And for this, as well as every blessing bestowed upon ungrateful and unworthy me, to the Lord's name be all the glory, and all the praise; for, as it was with Israel of old touching the earthly Canaan, so it is with the Lord's spiritual Israel touching the heavenly country, the land which is very far off; "They (natural Israel) got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them." And so it is with spiritual Israel: they can do nothing to obtain heaven; they have forfeited all right and title to every mercy by sin; therefore it is the Lord alone that does the work, that brings them in by an act

of free, sovereign grace, through faith in Christ Jesus, who is the only door of entrance, and the way to the kingdom. And blessed be God for Jesus Christ, through whom alone it is to be obtained! I have no more to say at present, than that I should esteem it a favour if you would remember me at a throne of grace, and that the Lord may ever be with you in your goings out and comings in, still giving testimony to the word of his grace, which shall be the prayer of

C. G.

TO MR. C. GOULDING.

My dearly beloved Son in Christ Jesus, mercy and truth be with thee.

THINE epistle came safe to hand, and I said in my heart, 'Who hath begotten me this child, seeing I am hated, and a captive driven to and fro, and have lost some spurious children, that the devil had palmed upon me? Who hath begotten me this? This!—where had he been? Surely thou art one born out of due time; before I travailed in birth thou art come forth. Who hath heard such a thing? Before our Zion began labour, and lamented her late miscarriage, another is found upon her knee; and I hope not a spurious one, not a base-born son, not a bastard that escapes both the

soul-humblin^g chastisements, and the experimental instructions, given by our heavenly Father's rod. Thou appearest to be one who hast been whipped out of Satan's army by the King of kings and Lord of lords; thy back will proclaim thy discharge from that rebellious host. Welcome art thou to the Lord's standard; welcome to the banner of his love; welcome to the King's pardon; welcome to the divine bounty; and welcome to his eternal favour, and to all the gifts received for the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell with thee! But I must interrogate thee. How hast thou broken forth? This breach be upon thee, and God grant it never may be healed; for it is a breach in Satan's armour, and not in Zion's bounds. Thou art a branch in the noble vine; heaven hath planted thee wholly a right seed, such trust have I to Godward; not that I am able to think any thing right of myself, but my sufficiency is of God, who by his grace has made me what I am. Surely thou canst never turn into the degenerate plant of a strange vine to the heavenly Husbandman! Strangers to the good Shepherd shall beget strange children; and unsanctified labourers "shall plant their soil with strange slips, and in the day shall they make their plant to grow; but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief, and of desperate sorrow," Isai. xvii. 11. But I am persuaded better things of thee, my son, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus write. The contents of my son's epistle are good news

from a far country ; good news in the power, in the experience, and in the salvation of them, and in the happy enjoyment of all the blessings in them. The Spirit of God is a springing well, and the words of wisdom as a flowing brook ; and that moisture that accompanies the root of the matter in the heart will likewise attend a reason of the hope from the mouth.

Thou hadst no call to inform me what instrument God used in framing thy soul for his temple ; the whole pattern was shewn first to me in the holy mount, and thine is nothing but an abridgement of it. The features, the family likeness throughout thy mystical pedigree, parentage, and education, are conspicuous enough. If I had heard thee giving an exhortation when locked up in a closet out of my sight, even in the East Indies, I should have known both thy voice, and the voice of thy progenitor, for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Thou art the Coalheaver's own child, begotten to a lively hope by the Father of all mercies in my bonds ; a true copy, a living epistle, known and read of all men ; and made manifest to be the epistle of Christ ministered by me, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of God ; not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart. When the Almighty first found me in Egyptian darkness, I spoke a language that he understood not, Psalm lxxxi. 5 : but he set me down at his foot, and taught me out of his law ; and, when he put a new treasure into my heart, he convinced

me that I wanted a new tongue to bring that treasure forth; and, when the cloven tongue of fire came, I spake a new language, that which so much puzzled thee at thy first hearing me; and it has puzzled thousands more as well as you; but certain I am that it is the language of Canaan—the language of the better covenant, which was spoken by Melchisedec and by Abraham in that country; by all the prophets afterwards, and by Christ and his apostles; and is peculiar to the promised land, to the Israel of God, and to none else; for, though other people may have learnt a smatch of it, yet by them it is always adulterated with the dialect of Ashdod: a mingled seed will speak an impure language, mixing it with the native brogue of their own country. And I was (as well as another person in company with me) much surprised at reading your epistle; and not a little struck with astonishment at the pureness of the language, the clearness of the style, and especially at the weight of the emphasis, the determination of the points, and the eloquent punctuation of the accents, knowing that it is a language hard to be learnt, and the pronounciation of it difficult to be obtained. But is there any thing too hard for the Lord? No, there is not; “for then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.” Zeph. iii. 9.

What divine veracity hath promised omnipotence hath performed, and thou art a living wit-

ness of this truth. We may call it the holy tongue; and sure I am that the same will be spoken in heaven; for, although it be said, if there be tongues, tongues shall cease; that is, the jargon and confusion of tongues shall cease at the destruction of Babel and Babel-builders, yet the pure language, the holy tongue, and the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, shall never cease. This language shall be spoken in Paradise, or else how shall we sing hallelujahs, and salvation to God and the Lamb for ever and ever? or how shall we awake in the great day? and how shall our tongues awake, which are our glory? (Psalm lvii. 7, 8,) and of which we glory above all the creatures that God hath made in this world. When we receive the end of our faith, we shall admire the end of our conversation also; and, with Paul in the third heaven, not only hear things which are not possible for a man to utter, (2 Cor. xii. 4.) but be able to utter them; for it will be both possible and lawful to utter them when we get into that country; for, although their purity greatly exceeds ours, yet ours is the only dialect of that mother tongue. "He that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him," and "a wise son maketh a glad father;" and I hope I shall have joy of thee. But there are such things as false conceptions and false brethren; and sure I am that the father of a fool hath no joy; for a fool is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. But neither a

faithful ambassador, nor the incorruptible seed of divine truth, nor Zion's prolific womb, can ever be the origin or fountain of such monstrous productions; witness Judas, who sprung up under the ministry of the everlasting Father himself, and who got upon the knees of gospel Zion, even among her first offspring, and had part of the inheritance among the brethren, and part of the double honour due to her most renowned sons.

He was an apostle and purse-bearer to the King of kings; he had gifts of prayer, preaching, working miracles, and casting out devils, but no grace: "he took part of this ministry with us," saith Peter, "but from this he by transgression fell," as all will whose hearts are not established with grace. For strong men shall utterly fall; but he that hath life and a gift shall have more abundance; whilst he that hath not life, but merely a gift, it shall be taken away from him, even that which he hath. "If the Prince (of peace) give a gift to a (bond) servant, it shall be his to the year of jubilee," or as long as the fleshly joy of his natural affections lasts; but, when he gets under the legal lashes of law and conscience, cursing him for his hypocrisy, it shall then return to the Prince, as the talent of Judas did to Christ, and from Christ to Matthias; but, if the Prince of Peace give a gift to one of his sons, it shall be his to enjoy, and shall be his inheritance for evermore; for such shall have more abundance; (Ezek. xlvii. 16, 17;) more

abundant life, more grace, more strength, more light, and the abundance of peace, so long as the moon endures.

- I thank God, with all my heart, that another brand is plucked from the fire; one more olive-berry left upon the uppermost bough; one more cluster with a blessing in it; one more ear of corn in the valley of Rephaim, as the first-fruits of God's creatures, even first-fruits unto God and the Lamb. I bless God, thou art among the children that God hath given to our Zion since we lost the other, (I mean the mixt multitude that fell a-lusting, Numb. xi. 4;) these seem to be whispering in our ears 'the place is too strait for us, make room for us that we may dwell;' and my answer is, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without?" The oxen and the fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage. "Wisdom cries, and understanding puts forth her voice; she hath furnished her table, and bid her guests; Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." May the Lord of lords satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; that thou mayest be as a watered garden, and as springs of water whose waters fail not; this is the hearty prayer and earnest desire of, Dear Son,

Thine affectionate Father in the faith
and love of the gospel of Christ Jesus

W. H. S. S.

In addition to these two letters (which I pray God may be attended with his blessing,) I have but a few more particulars before I conclude. You say, "I ceased to read the scriptures for four months." There is something in my own experience corresponding with this. When I lived at Penrith, I found a wish spring up in my heart to have a bible, (and from a child I can trace a desire to know the scriptures;) upon which I went to a bookseller's and purchased one: but no sooner did I open it than I felt such dreadful sensations come upon me, and such a prejudice spring up in my mind against it, that I closed the book immediately, and took it back again to the bookseller, and exchanged it for its value in writing-paper; and from that time I never more looked at a bible until this text was revealed and applied to me;—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" which was after I came to London, as related in my letter. O how does Satan hate the word! and no wonder, it being the sword which the Lord Jesus Christ uses to cast him out of the hearts of his people, Isai. xxvii. 1. But, when the set time comes to favour Zion, all the devils in hell cannot any longer keep it from us. You then observe, "I have disputed for the doctrines of election and predestination as truths, when I had no hope or expectation of being interested in them." I have also defended and insisted upon particular doctrines as true, and could not bear to hear any one speak against them,

though at the same time they appeared against me; and have quarrelled with them in my own heart, though I could not suffer others openly to oppose them; which shews that there was a firm faith in God's truth, and a love to it at the bottom, otherwise we never should have contended so for it; "Let them hear, and say, It is truth," Isai. xliii. 9. Again you say, "If I read your letter right, I have said something that I could not believe, and you wish to know what it is." You did not understand my meaning; that part of my letter to which you allude was worded thus; "If you found unbelief work, tell me what it was that you could not believe?" When the Lord was pleased to teach you out of his law, you found yourself shut up in unbelief; and when here I wanted to know what it was that you could not believe: and it was this; you could not believe in the love of God to you. You found the fullest assurance of faith in the truth of God, in his threatenings, his justice, holiness, and unchangeableness; but, while he was teaching you out of the law, you could not believe that you had any part or lot in his grace, mercy, favour, good-will, and love towards you in Christ Jesus.

You go on; "For these three years past my comforts have been upon the decline." It is a pity but they had all been taken away long ago, for you have had them too long, longer than is usual in the household of faith. I believe it is a

rare thing for a child of God to retain the enjoyment of his comforts after his first deliverance for more than a year. The worst part of your letter, therefore, is that which states the length of your comforts; but the effects of pardoning love upon your soul, at the time of your deliverance, were such as clearly to manifest that it was the love of God, no other love ever having such blessed and glorious effects attending it as you experienced upon the pardon of your sins. Though my comforts and consolations only lasted a few months, yet even then I began to be afraid of them, on account of such passages as these,—“Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom,” Acts xiv. 22. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him,” James i. 12. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,” &c. Heb. xii. 6. These passages of scripture made me afraid, and I wished to feel their force, to satisfy me that I was in the way to the kingdom. It was not long however before I had such an experience of their contents, that I longed for some of my former old fare again—I mean comforts and consolations.

You say you are glad that I am not willing to lay my hand suddenly upon you. My prayer for you is, that God's good hand may ever be upon you; that you may be kept by his power, and guided in a right way to a city of habitation. I

believe that God hath given you an honest and sincere heart; "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," deceit, or hypocrisy! You are in my heart a true copy, a living epistle; and I believe the Lord hath, in the multitude of his mercies, given us a sure dwelling-place in the cleft of the Rock, the sure refuge and hiding place; and may he be pleased to grant that, as the true circumcision, we may ever worship him in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

I think I have noticed every particular in your letter. I might, indeed, have enlarged upon many things; but, as they are more minutely handled in the letter to my sister, I beg your particular attention to that. Hoping that our correspondence may not cease, I shall at all times be glad to hear from you; and perhaps we may both have reason to bless God that ever we had a meeting at Faugh-heads. You tell me that you have been buffeted by men and devils for fifteen years, during which you must have gone through a deal of hard service. The more opposition we meet with, the closer do we cleave to Christ; and the more we cleave to him, the more useful and fruitful we are, the more God is glorified, and so all things work together for our good under the all-wise management of our heavenly Father.

As you have been much opposed by the Arminians, I send you 'The Arminian Skeleton,' where

you will find him dissected by Dr. Huntington, whose peculiar skill in anatomy I beg you to observe. It appears to me that he has fully exposed him; and no wonder, seeing he works with the best of instruments, which are extremely sharp, and in constant practice. The Arminian is a complete body of corruption; and the Doctor's instruments have been so powerfully handled as completely to make it manifest. 'The Funeral of Arminianism' I believe you have. I beg your acceptance of 'The Correspondence,' which will no doubt be very acceptable, as also 'The Child of Liberty in legal Bondage;' and may it please the Lord to give testimony to them as the word of his own grace!

I believe that God hath given you a clearer heart-felt experience than either preacher or professor in your parts. It differs widely from the generality of profession; and I doubt not but God will own and acknowledge it even to the end, while much that is called true experience will be found at last to be nothing less than a delusion. The Lord first of all quickened your soul to feel the state you were in, and shewed you what you really were; then he taught you out of his holy law, brought you in guilty, stopped your mouth from all boasting; and then drew you, as a poor burdened sinner, to his dear Son; raised you to a lively hope, by the application of the promises of pardon for sin; then revealed his dear Son to you, whom you em-

braced in faith as your own Redeemer. This was attended with pardon, peace, and the love of God felt in your heart, which drew forth that repentance that needs never to be repented of, and set you down at rest and at home in Christ, justified freely from all things, and delivered from all condemnation. Then your judgment was passed; you were acquitted by the application of the atoning blood of Christ; and by the imputation of his righteousness the Holy Spirit pronounced the sentence of justification in the court of conscience, and bore his witness to your adoption and sonship, when you knew the Lord to be your own everlasting portion. And this, being God's work upon your soul, must be your rule to judge and examine every preacher and professor by. If they know nothing of those things which you have felt, then you may depend upon it they have only a superficial profession; and the Lord calls thus upon his people; "Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation; for a law shall proceed from me (the law of faith from Christ,) and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people," Isai. li. 4. And the Lord's judgment of his elect, and his justifying of them by an act of free, sovereign grace, will ever be a light to them, or a rule of judgment, as long as they are in this world. Your patience will perhaps be tried by not hearing from me sooner; but, as I always keep a copy by me of every thing I write

upon religion, which requires more time than I can always spare, I can assure you I have been obliged, as it is, to write hard all night. I know, by experience, that the grace of God cannot lead either into sinfulness or idleness, but always into fruitfulness to God, and diligence in wisdom's ways. Remember me to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, not forgetting your household. I by no means wish you to keep this secret, leaving to your discretion to do with it as you please; but surely, as we are such debtors to free, sovereign grace and electing love, it will be more for God's glory, and the good of souls, to say with David, "Come hither, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." We ought not to be ashamed, but to make our boast of, and triumph in, our covenant God and Father, all the day long.

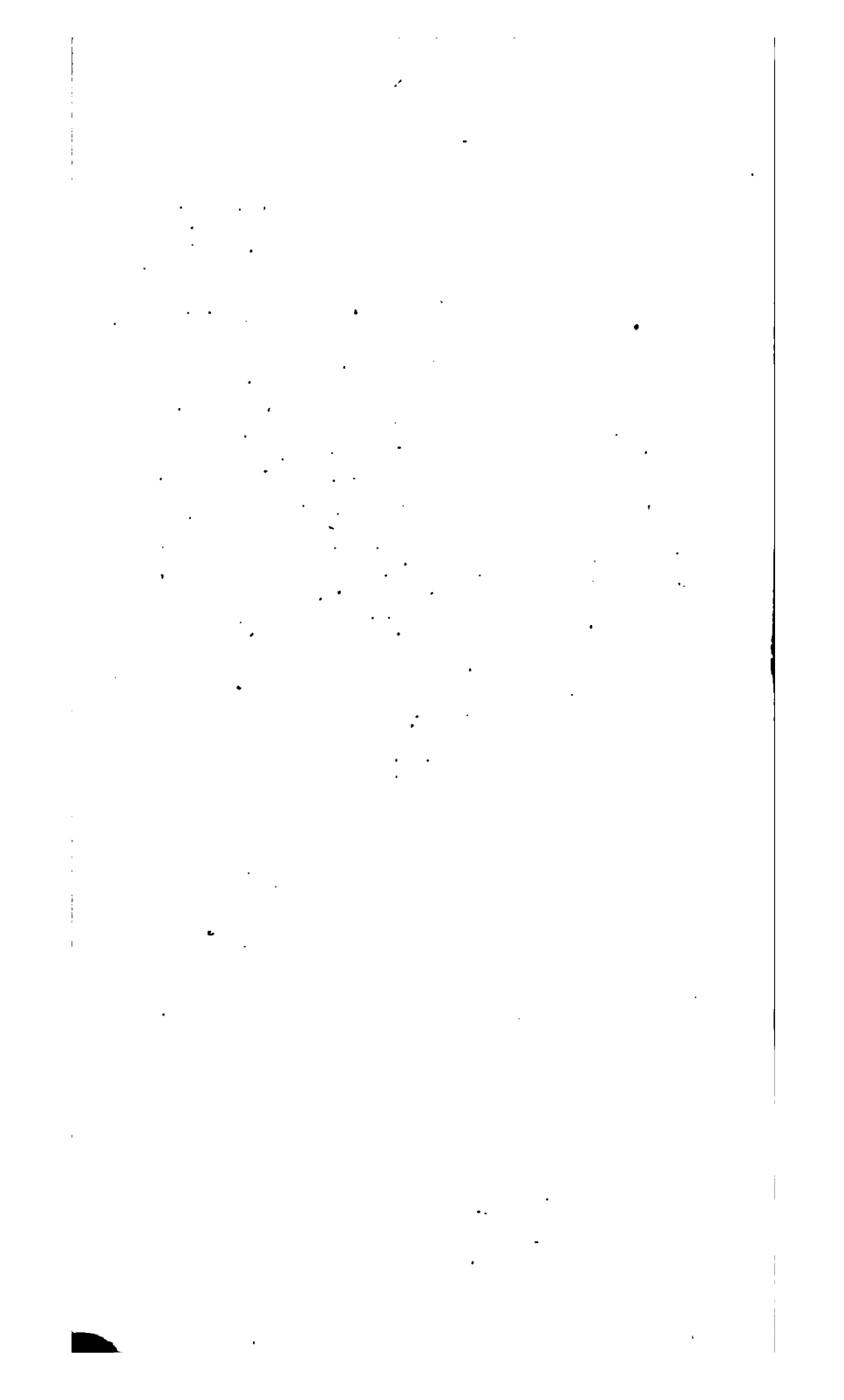
That this may be a word in due season; that you may be fed with knowledge and understanding, and triumph over every enemy in Christ; that your path may shine more and more; that you may be favoured with more judgment in your goings, more faith, hope, and love, in exercise; enjoy refreshing from the Lord's presence; that he may turn the shadow of death into the morning; that you may look to Christ continually, and be receiving from his fulness an abundant supply for every want; that you may be like a tree, planted by the waters, that sendeth

out her roots by the rivers; that your leaf may be green; that you may never cease from yielding fruit, either thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold; that you may grow as the lily of the vallies; revive as the corn (after refreshing showers); that you may be indulged with such views of a reconciled God and Father shining in the face of Jesus Christ, as that with open face (in opposition to the veil upon the heart,) you may so look as to be changed into the image of Christ, and under these transforming views his glory may be seen upon you, and be your everlasting light, your God and your glory, and consequently your never-setting sun; is the desire and prayer of,

Dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in covenant love,
and willing servant for Christ's sake,

CHRISTOPHER GOULDING.



(4)

A

REFUTATION
OF
THE ERRONEOUS DOCTRINES OF THE
MORTALITY
OF THE
BODY OF CHRIST;
AND OF
THE GLORIOUS FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH
BEING
THE EVERLASTING LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST.

In a Letter to a Friend in the Country.

BY
CHRISTOPHER GOULDING.

Christ offered himself without spot to God.—Heb. ix. 14.

A Lamb without blemish and without spot.—1 Peter i. 19.

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. iii. 11.

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1826.



*To the Congregation assembling at Providence Chapel
in Gray's Inn Lane; and to all those Friends in
the Country, who love us in the truth, and for the
truth's sake.*

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE following letter was not written with a view to its publication; but more privately to bear my testimony against what I conceive to be an error of no small magnitude.

Before sending it, however, to the friend to whom it is addressed, I put it into the hands of some of my friends in town, for their perusal—to whose judgment and experience I pay great deference and respect; and, as they unanimously approved of it, and recommended its publication, with their solicitations I have complied.

As a church, and individually, we consider that we have been uncourteously treated by some of Mr. V——ll's London friends, who have exulted over us on the subject of their favourite theme, *the mortality of the body of Christ*, as though it was a truth that could not be successfully controverted—a doctrine that could never be scripturally overthrown.—

Whether this has been accomplished in the following pages I leave to the judgment of the church of Christ, which, as the pillar and ground of truth, under the influence and teaching of the Holy Spirit, is qualified to form a right decision on the subject, seeing "He that is spiritual judgeth all things," 1 Cor. ii. 15.

Another inducement I had to send forth my remarks from the press was, that, as the error had been thus publicly circulated, so the refutation of it should be also, that the remedy might (by the blessing of God) be spread as wide as the disease; and that it might appear also that we are not afraid to meet our opponents in public whenever the honour of God, the glory of Christ, the cause of truth, and the welfare of souls, are at stake. For myself, I can honestly declare that I feel reproof in my conscience that the subject has not been sooner taken notice of. A feeling sense of my own insufficiency for every thing that is good has been the occasion of my long silence, till at length I could no longer hold my peace, conceiving that no sufficient reason can be given why the defence of a good cause, and the refutation of a bad one, should any longer be withheld from the public.

It is by conniving at errors, through the fear of giving offence to their authors, and by trimming

and paring to please all parties, that brings the truth into disgrace, and that has almost destroyed the prosperity of the church in our times, thereby preventing her from appearing distinct from the world and from hypocritical professors, which is her undoubted privilege; for it is said, "Lo, the people (of Israel) shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations," Numb. xxiii. 9. Thus you see the children of God are manifestly a distinct people when called by grace, and brought to the knowledge of Christ, and to the enjoyment of communion and fellowship with him. And they ought more highly to prize their privileges and divine favours than they do; then the presence and blessing of God would be more enjoyed; as he says: "Them that honour me I will honour, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed," 1 Sam. ii. 30. Such as are valiant for truth shall ever enjoy the approbation of God; whilst all the hatred and opposition of men and devils will be a burden comparatively light; for, if truth be cleared and successfully defended, all the scorn and contempt it may excite will be honourable and glorious to those who experience it. The disciples of old "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ," Acts v. 41.

The dastardly cowardice to which the Church is

always subject when in a cold and lukewarm state; which has been gradually creeping in upon her for many years past, and which is obvious in our times; has encouraged erroneous men to that insolent boldness in disseminating those awful errors and delusions with which the land is now almost deluged, there being but few who make any attempt to arrest their destructive progress. And I know of none more pernicious than those circulated by ministers who hold the truth in unrighteousness, (Rom. i. 18) preaching Christ clearly according to the letter of scripture, having a speculative and notional knowledge of him only, and thereby simply believing the record God gives in his word of his dear Son; but who, being virtually destitute of the saving knowledge of him by the forgiveness of their sins, and the justification of their persons, merely believe the report which the word gives of Jesus Christ; but to whom the arm of the Lord is not revealed, Isa. lxi. 1. They see the glory of Christ "as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," (John i. 14) and preach him fluently and clearly; but never receive from his fulness grace for grace, (John i. 16) nor virtue from him to heal their diseases and save their souls. And, though they preach justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, they themselves were never justified thereby, so as to pass from death

serve the following.—A minister being asked what he meant by ‘the mortality of the body of Christ,’ or how it was to be understood, replied (to a friend of mine) that it was to be taken in the grossest sense that can be conceived!!! That gentleman, I think, must at all events be a very gross teacher, who made the assertion, which leaves us in very little doubt what spirit he is of.

Another minister has gone so far as to say that, ‘*God communicates his very nature and essence to his people!*’ And thus he deifies human nature, though God is the self-existent, incommunicable Jehovah! But in this Satan has so outdone himself, that such a man ought to sink beneath the notice of every one possessing the least reverence of God. What shocking results and what dreadful consequences arise, when men are left to speak so contrary to the oracles of God! If British Protestant ministers continue to publish from the press, and assert from their pulpits, such errors and glaring absurdities as have been issued for some time past, and such as are now disseminating, British churches will fall under the scorn, derision, and contempt, of all the world professing Christianity; and, what is worse, must incur the heavy displeasure of God.

With these remarks I close my subject; committing them to the blessing of that God, who knows how to use them (as far as they may accord with his heavenly will) for his people's good and his own glory.

I have now only to apologize for the length of this epistle: but I thought a few occasional digressions, and a little comment on some particular passages of scripture, might be agreeable; and therefore presumed to enlarge rather more than was absolutely necessary to confute the error of the mortality of the body of Christ.

I am aware there may be much of tautology and prolixity, as well as other imperfections, in these pages; for which my only apology is, that I am a man of slender talent; a very poor scholar; and, being in business, have but little time to spare; so that I have been obliged to write this letter at different times; therefore you must not be surprised if the subject is not so judiciously arranged, or neatly handled, as might be wished. Nevertheless, I cheerfully commit the fruit of my labours to your candid perusal with all their imperfections, knowing that I am not writing to a critic, but to a friend, who will read what I have said with prayer to God for his blessing, so far as I have been enabled to speak consistently with his mind and will in his word.

And, if on perusal you and the rest of the friends in Lincolnshire (for I wish them to see it) are satisfied that I have fully proved, by the word of God, that the doctrine of 'the mortality of Christ's body' is a gross and dangerous error, I shall think my time well spent in performing so good a work; and that object attained will more than counterbalance all the imperfections in the means by which it has been accomplished.

God grant that his blessing, so far as I have been enabled to vindicate the Saviour's person from degradation, and to speak to the glory and honour of his truth, may attend this epistle to the profit of souls, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

For the present farewell; and, with the best of wishes for Mrs. Isaac's and your own real happiness and prosperity, as well as for all others that love us in the faith and hope of the gospel,

I remain, my dear Kind Friend,

Very truly your willing Servant,

For Christ's and the truth's sake,

C. GOULDING.

unto life, never more to come into a state of condemnation. Such preachers are by far the most dangerous, because their doctrines are sound, and therefore they excite the less suspicion. And we have many such in our days. The parable of the sower elucidates the whole: "While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way," Matt. xiii. 25. Oh, that the Church was but awakened out of her sleepy state to see her danger, and stirred up to contend earnestly for the truth of the gospel!

I hope that, in my small measure, God hath given me to possess the same firmness and intrepidity of spirit and principle, in behalf of the truth, as one of our English divines possessed, (and no doubt numbers beside him) who was perhaps one of the ablest and most faithful servants of God, in opposing error and vindicating the truth from its baneful effects, that ever used a pen. His words are these: "I can never sufficiently bless God for giving me to see the day when I can truly affirm that I care not whom I displease, when the inestimable truths of the gospel are at stake!"—(Toplady's Letter to the Rev. Mr. B. P. of New York.—Vol. VI. p. 197, of the edit. of 1794.)

This able minister of Christ and Isaiah appear to have been taught of God in some measure alike, in order that they might be useful to the Church of God,

and be vallant for truth, in opposition to all error. The prophet speaks of himself thus: "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not 'a confederacy' to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary," Isa. viii. 11--13. It is this teaching that keeps God's children sound in the truth, and makes them as iron pillars and brazen walls in defence of it, Jerem. i. 18.

Having thus offered my thoughts respecting the mortality of the body of Christ, I could not refrain from taking notice of the assertion of another minister, who says that '*The everlasting love of God in Christ Jesus is the glorious foundation of the Church of God!*' If ministers are allowed to go on in such declarations as these, and multiply erroneous assertions in the profuse manner they are now doing, with impunity, the truth will ere long be so buried and obscured with errors, that the souls of the people will perish for lack of knowledge, Hos. iv. 6. Therefore every successful attempt to clear away the rubbish, and bring forth the truth as it is in Christ to light, in its native simplicity, purity and glory,

stripped of all false glosses, and separated from the erroneous opinions of uninspired men, with which it is so often obscured, to the injury of the souls of God's people, must be a good work; and in scripture such instruments are called "the restorers of paths to dwell in," (Isa. lviii. 12,) whose praise shall ever be in all the true churches of Christ. Lord, increase their number if such be thy heavenly will!

And now, my friends, let me request that you will peruse what I have here written without prejudice, and with prayer to God for wisdom, that you may not be deceived; and that, as far as is consistent with truth, it may be made a blessing to your souls. Bring every thing that I have said to the word of God; give it the strictest examination by that royal standard of all truth, that you may be enabled rightly to discriminate whether what I have written is true or false. If false, reject it firmly; but, if true, then let us rejoice together, and triumph in the God of all our mercies, who has promised to give to those whom he teaches "a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist," Luke xxi. 15. Where this is the case God has prepared the heart, and given an answer to the tongue, Prov. xvi. 1; and then the tongue becomes the pen of a ready writer, Psalm xlv. 1. Such an one is "a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of

heaven, and is like unto a man that is an householder; which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old," Matt. xiii. 52; whereby the saints are instructed, fed with knowledge and understanding, and so nourished up in the words of faith and sound doctrine, even the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine which is according to godliness.—And thus they are enabled to live in a fruitful profession of Christ, "having their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life" in glory.

Many of us have long known each other, and have lived in sweet communion and fellowship together; and neither the devil, nor all his agents, have as yet been able to separate us from Christ, nor from the prayers and affections of one another. God himself hath fixed us upon the Rock, and therefore we have stood, and withstood all our adversaries. His grace, his Spirit, and his power, have hitherto been sufficient to preserve and keep us alive unto himself; and I doubt not but we shall at last be more than conquerors through Christ, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests, that we may reign and live with him for ever.

Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved; and may the Lord keep us steadfast in our profession, cleaving to Christ with full purpose of heart, so as

never to be led astray from the truth by the superficial preaching and profession of this dark period of the Church. That God may be our light and our salvation, and that we may finish our course in sweet communion and fellowship with Christ, our own Saviour and Redeemer, is the desire and prayer of,

DEAR FRIENDS,

Yours most affectionately for Christ and the truth's sake,
though one of the feeblest of all the holy family,

CHRIST. GOULDING.

NORTHAMPTON SQUARE,
Sept. 3, 1896.

the same time, the fact that the same person can be both a subject and an object of a relation is not a contradiction. It is only a contradiction if the same person is both a subject and an object of a relation in the same way.

For example, a person can be both a subject and an object of a relation in the same way if the relation is a relation of self-love. In this case, the person is both the subject and the object of the relation in the same way. This is not a contradiction.

On the other hand, a person can be both a subject and an object of a relation in different ways. For example, a person can be both a subject and an object of a relation of love. In this case, the person is the subject of the relation in one way and the object of the relation in another way. This is not a contradiction.

Therefore, the fact that the same person can be both a subject and an object of a relation is not a contradiction. It is only a contradiction if the same person is both a subject and an object of a relation in the same way.

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TO MR. BRYAN ISAACS,

Caythorpe, Lincolnshire.

My dear Friend and Fellow-traveller
to the better Country,

I HAVE long purposed to write to you upon a subject, on which I could not feel comfortable in my mind without bearing my testimony against it, and am now in my study for that purpose. I wish the subject had fallen into abler hands; but God is all-sufficient; and, as he rebuked the madness of the prophet by Balaam's ass in old time, so he can do the same now; and the meaner the instrument, the more is the power, the grace, and the wisdom of God, manifested, and his glory shines the brighter; therefore I am encouraged to proceed.

In 1822, Mr. J—n V—ll, minister at L—s, in S—x, published his Confession of Faith, in which, speaking of the human nature, or of the body which the Son of God assumed at his incarnation, he says, "It was the same body that hung, suffered, and died on the tree, that was raised again the third day; with this difference, before he suffered it was a mortal

body, but it was raised again *immortal*, spiritual, powerful, and glorious," pp. 21, 22.

The object, therefore, I have in view on the present occasion, is to oppose Mr. V——'s assertion that it was a *mortal* body. Any thing and every thing that degrades the Saviour, and that lessens him in the view of the church and people of God, or, that in the least derogates either from the truth and glory of his person, or of his work, must be withstood; for we are exhorted and commanded to "strive together for the faith of the gospel," and also "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." And, to such as speak contrary to sound doctrine, we are not to give place, no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel may continue with us. I will therefore, as the Lord shall enable me, treat,

- I. *Of the origin or cause of mortality.*
- II. *Of the human nature of Christ, shewing how his body was formed.*
- III. *Of the blessed effects of his incarnation.*
- IV. *Oppose the belief of the mortality of Christ's body, and shew in some instances the evil consequences arising from such an error.*
- V. *Shew the absolute necessity of Christ's body being in itself free from every cause of death, in order to establish and preserve a sure foundation for the church of God.*
- VI. *In conclusion, make some observations, arising from what has been said.*

I. *The Origin or Cause of Mortality.*

If we read the account of the creation, the origin of beings, we there find that they were all pure, holy, free from sin, and had no evil in them, but were in peace with one another: the lamb was safe with the lion, and the kid with the wolf was in no danger; the serpent then possessed no destructive qualities, and all creatures lived in the sweetest fellowship and harmony with one another, Adam being sole monarch over them in Eden:—and the state of Adam was then most blessed, for thus we read, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them,” and confirmed them in the dominion and power which he promised at the creation of Adam. But it appears that they never had that universal dominion out of the garden of Eden. After the whole creation was finished, it is said, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day,” Gen. i.

Thus God declares that every thing which he had made was very good; then, if very good, entirely free from evil; consequently Adam in innocency was holy; must be so, because he was in possession of the image of God; and his nature, as it came out of the hands of God, was naturally immortal, no cause of death was in him; had he remained in the state he was in when first created, he could never have died, for there was no mortality in his nature. Why so? because there was no sin. He walked with God in the sweetest communion and fellowship, and it is wonderful to notice the wisdom and knowledge he possessed; only observe: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and brought them unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field." And it is said by some (which I believe to be a great truth) that the name of every creature was according to its nature, as is fully confirmed in what is said at the formation of Eve: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought unto the

man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." Here we see, though Adam was fast asleep when the rib was taken out of his side, and made a woman, that no sooner was it done, and she was brought to Adam, but he knew her directly, and her origin, and gave her a name suitable thereto, and a name suitable to her nature: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." And I think it is somewhere said by Mr. John Bunyan, upon being asked how we shall know each other in heaven, that he answered, "It will be in the same way that Adam first knew Eve, and that was by the Spirit of God."—If this be admitted, which in my judgment is the truth, then Adam was a spiritual man; and, if a partaker of the Holy Spirit to such a degree in his state of sinless perfection, then there could be no *mortality* about him; his body could not be a *mortal* body: no, there was no mortality then in the human frame.—But now we must take leave of this state of perfection, and descend into a state of misery and wo.

The fall of our first parents we have recorded in the third chapter of Genesis. And, as the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, the devil made use of it in preference to

all others; and began first of all to raise a doubt in Eve's mind of the truth of the word of God. And he said unto the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And, having thus gained her attention, the devil followed it up by a further attack; for, when Eve said, "But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die," the devil boldly contradicted God's positive injunction and command, saying, "Ye shall not surely die." And thus the devil was a liar from the beginning: and, having said this, he then set before her the great advantages that would arise from eating of the forbidden fruit; insinuating at the same time that by this restriction God was dealing unkindly in withholding from them so much knowledge: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."—And upon this she believed the devil's lie, and disbelieved the truth of God, which was the foundation of that most horrid sin of unbelief. Whereupon the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, entered her heart, (which, John says, is all that is in the world, 1 Epist. ii. 16,) which at once prepared her to transgress the command of God. "And,

when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise," (now, O now, the fatal, and what a fatal moment!) "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also to her husband, and he did eat:"—and the effect was, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."—Aye, and they knew also what they were ignorant of when in innocency; (O happy ignorance!) they knew sin and shame! "And they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."—And then, for the first time, flowed in, as the dire effects of sin, *mortality*! Here is the origin of mortality, and sin the sole cause.—Upon this the image of God left our first parents; and at that moment all spiritual life took its flight, according to God's threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and so they did! to all spiritual life, and to all communion and fellowship with God; although their natural life was preserved long after that. What a change!—instead of life came death—instead of light, darkness—instead of holiness, sin—instead of love, enmity—instead of peace, misery—instead of righteousness, condemnation—instead of communion and fellowship with God, they were before him as guilty criminals, and far from him by their sin—instead of knowledge,

the grossest ignorance possessed them, as we see when "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden," as if there could be a hiding-place from the omniscience of God! O ignorance extreme!—And, for aspiring to infinite wisdom, they lost all, and were turned out of the garden of Eden. Take notice: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, (the persons in the Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—are here meant by the plural expression *us*), to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

But here I must be allowed to trespass a moment upon your time before I proceed, to remark that the saving mercy of God through Christ, the promised seed, was made known to them before they left the garden; for, after they were convinced of sin, felt the destroying power of it, and were brought in guilty before God, they were then brought to believe in Christ, the promised seed, who was to de-

stroy the devil and his power in all the elect: and it is said, "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them;" and when that was done they were delivered from death and condemnation, by the application of Christ's atoning blood and everlasting righteousness to their hearts, typified by the slain beasts, whose blood and skins represented the blood and righteousness of Christ.—And this is plainly spoken of in Solomon's Song, alluding to God's saving our first parents, by his free, sovereign grace, in the garden of Eden, under the very tree where they fell. The words are beautiful, "I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee," Song viii. 5. So that our first parents left the garden of Eden as the children of God by election, by adoption, and by grace, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and in possession of a meetness for heaven, being renewed by the Spirit, and born again of him, and so in covenant with God. Thus Christ, the promised seed, was first laid in Eden as the only sure foundation for the church; and Adam and Eve were the first lively stones built thereon, who were followed by Abel and the elect of God in regular succession to the present day; and the building still goes up, not by human might,

nor by human power, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Now to proceed. That sin is the cause of mortality is further plain from scripture. Paul says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—"Death reigned from Adam to Moses."—"Through the offence of one many be dead."—"By one man's offence death reigned."—"By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."—"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners."—"Sin hath reigned unto death," Rom. v.—"The wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23; and, in consequence, "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb. ix. 27; being by sin, and by sin alone, become mortal creatures: hence all must necessarily die; and the body at death is said to be "sown in corruption—in dishonour—in weakness," 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. "The body is dead because of sin," Rom. viii. 10. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23; and the corruption and depravity of human nature by sin is total: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores," Isa. i. 6. And to this Paul agrees: "There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that un-

derstandeth, there is none that seeketh after God ; they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one ; their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness ; their feet are swift to shed blood ; destruction and misery are in all their ways, and the way of peace they have not known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes," Rom. iii. 10—18. One catalogue more to prove the sinfulness of our natures, and that sin is the cause of all mortality, and then I have done ; "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man ; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ; these are the things which defile a man," Matt. xv. 19—20 ; and prove him to be a frail, sinful, mortal creature ; but, when purged from sin, which will be the case at the resurrection of the just, the bodies of the elect will then no longer be mortal bodies, but immortal : immortality and eternal life will then be all in all : the body will be raised in incorruption—in glory—in power—a spiritual body," 1 Cor. xv. 42—44. And let this be a concluding proof that sin must be the origin or cause of mortality, because where

there is no sin there is no mortality; therefore the human nature of Christ, being entirely free from sin, it could not be a mortal body: but of this more hereafter.

I come now to treat,

II. Of the human nature of Christ, shewing how his body was formed.

That the Son of God did assume a real human nature is very clear from scripture. It was settled in the council of peace and covenant of grace in eternity; and hence Christ (Prov. viii. 23,) speaks of himself, "I was set up from everlasting," to become future man and mediator, that the objects of God's everlasting choice might be delivered from all the dreadful effects of the fall, and saved in Christ with an everlasting salvation. It is also said, speaking of the Father, "A body hast thou prepared me," Heb. x. 5. And it is curiously wrapped up in Psalm cxxxix. 15, "My substance was not hid from thee (in the margin it is *body*) when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me,

O God! how great is the sum of them!" Here we see, first, the formation of the body of Christ in the virgin's womb, by the power of the Holy Ghost, with all its parts and members: and, secondly, we have a beautiful view of Christ, the head of the elect, and of all his members, which were written in the Lamb's book of life in eternity; and of their coming to him in time, until the whole mystical body of Christ becomes complete, and enjoys communion and fellowship with him: "Thine eyes did see my substance," or my mystical body, being appointed and ordained from all eternity, though yet imperfect; not all the members yet united to Christ, their covenant head and head of influence: and in thy book (the Lamb's book of life) all my members were written at once, when given by the Father to Christ, as he says, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me," while they had no actual existence, but should have from the commencement of time: "Which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Hence we read of Christ rejoicing in the foreview of becoming incarnate, to save his sheep, before sin entered into the world, or death by sin: "While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world;" or the chiefest part, which was man, Prov. viii. 26; but even then (in eternity)

“rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men” (verse 31) when the earth was not created, nor any of the sons of men formed: but this shews his goings forth, in love and tender mercy, to have been from of old, from everlasting, Micah v. 2. And in another place we read, “Thou, O Lord, art our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting;” or as in the margin, (a better reading) “Redeemer from everlasting is thy name,” Isa. lxiii. 16. He was the eternal Word, that spoke for us in eternity, and undertook to be our Saviour and Redeemer; and, in order to accomplish his loving, gracious, purposes towards his people, he was to become incarnate, as quoted before: “A body hast thou prepared me;” which in the fulness of time he did assume. “Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book (in the very first roll of the book of God’s decrees) it is written of me,” (that I shall become incarnate and assume this body prepared, and in it) “I delight to do thy will, O my God!” Ps. xl. 7, 8. And, as preludes to this his future incarnation, he sometimes assumed the appearance of a man.—To Abraham, as one of three men, “in the plains of Mamre,” Gen. xviii. 1, 2. “To Joshua, in the plains of Jericho, as the captain of the Lord’s host, with a drawn sword in his hand,” Josh. v. 14. But never actually became

incarnate, nor appeared in a real human body, until he was born of Mary, full four thousand years after, and revealed as the woman's promised seed in the garden of Eden to our first parents. The appointed time, the fulness of the time appointed and settled in eternity, was when Mary brought him forth at Bethlehem in a stable, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. That was the time when he really was revealed as Immanuel, God with us. God and man in one person!—One of the grandest—one of the most sublime—one of the most astonishing mysteries—and which was attended with the most wonderful and glorious consequences to poor sinners that was ever made known! There was not an angel of heaven absent on the occasion—they were all present with the shepherds, to proclaim the glad tidings of the birth of the Saviour, and to sing, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, and good will towards men!” Luke ii. 14. Where it is said (in ver. 13), a multitude, it ought to be *the* multitude, which would agree with that other scripture “When he bringeth his first-begotten into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him,” Heb. i. 6; which I have no doubt was exactly fulfilled. The heavenly choir for that time were absent from heaven, to attend upon their Creator and preserver.

I come now to the manner of his conception and birth. Had the humanity of the Saviour come by natural generation, as is the case with the fallen children of Adam, his nature would have partaken, first, of original sin, and thence of actual transgression; and then he could not have been a Saviour, for he would have been a sinner himself. But God, who is infinite in wisdom and almighty in power, formed a plan, and executed it, to accomplish all his decrees and purposes respecting the salvation of his elect family, of which we read thus: "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth—a woman shall compass a man!" Jer. xxxi. 22. This means the formation of the human nature of Christ in the womb of the virgin without the interference of man, fully explained in the word thus: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured; (graciously accepted, or much graced;) the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." This salutation begetting in her fear, "The angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God; and, behold, thou shalt conceive in

thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name **JESUS**. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that **HOLY THING** which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," Luke i. 26—35. Here we have the truth fully before us—the human nature of Christ formed in the virgin's womb by the power of the Holy Ghost, and when born called a holy thing. It is spoken of in the neuter gender, because it never had personal subsistence, although the Son of God took it into union with his divine person in the virgin's womb: hence it is said, "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." So that the great mystery of godliness is "God manifest in the flesh"—two perfect natures, God and man, in one person. This is the mystery of mysteries, which none but God can comprehend. Now, if the human nature was holy, the produce of the Holy Spirit, how could it be mortal? No; he possessed no mortality in his holy and pure nature—the workmanship of God when it was "curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth," Psalm cxxxix. 15. It was entirely free from sin and from all pollution; and, in con-

sequence of this, those two passages of scripture in Job can be answered, for the human nature of Christ was clean, though "born of a woman," Job xiv. 4. And God brought the human nature of Christ, that holy thing, therefore a clean thing, out of Mary.—So that he was clean, though born of a sinful woman, who was a fallen creature in Adam, as well as all the rest of the human race, Job xiv. 4.—Again, Paul says, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," Heb. vii. 26. And in the days of his flesh he thus challenges all his enemies: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" But they were all mute.—And he adds, "The prince of this world cometh, but hath nothing in me," John xii. 30.—In Daniel it is said, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy," chap. ix. 24. And Paul calls him "the holy child Jesus," Acts iv. 27. "In him was no sin."—"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," 1 Peter ii. 22. Thus you see how full the scripture is in shewing us how the human nature of Christ was formed,

and of the perfection thereof; that, being formed by the Holy Ghost in the virgin's womb, it did not partake of original sin, and therefore was a suitable nature for the Son of God to assume. It was the true tabernacle, which God pitched and not man; and in which the Son of God dwelt: "For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And, because the Son of God assumed the nature of his people, and veiled the glory of his Godhead under a tabernacle of flesh, it might well be called a temple, because God was there. Hence Christ said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." He spake of the temple of his body, in which the Son of God dwelt.— Having, I hope, made my way plain hitherto by the word of God, I proceed to speak,

III. *Of the blessed effects of his incarnation.*

By the incarnation of the Son of God, as the heavenly host sang, "Glory to God (is brought) in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to men" is manifested. By the union of the two natures in the person of Christ a way of access to God is made manifest; and, being God and man in one person, Christ becomes a proper mediator and daysman between God and sinners. He stood in the gap,

closed up the breach that sin had made, and hath reconciled God to us, and us to God. From everlasting he undertook our cause—from everlasting undertook to be our Redeemer and Saviour—and by his incarnation he was put in a capacity to fulfil all his and his Father's will. As man he could suffer, and as God he could merit: therefore all that he did as man, his human nature being in union with the person of the Son of God, there was that infinite merit stamped upon it, and that everlasting and ever available worth, value and efficacy, put into all that he did and suffered, that his work for his people was perfect, and everlastingly efficacious to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

By the incarnation of the Son of God, "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Every threatening is executed, and every promise fulfilled, or made sure, to all his seed, by Christ our glorious Surety and Mediator; so that God can be strictly just, and yet justify the worst of sinners by faith in Christ crucified. In his holy life he obeyed every precept of the law, in the nature, in the name, in the room, and in the stead, of his elect. Not one jot or tittle of the law fails—he gave it a perfect obedience. As he was to magnify the law and make it honourable, so he did. He fulfilled

all righteousness; and his righteousness imputed is our justifying righteousness. . But, as it is said, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die;" which was the penalty annexed to the law in case of transgression; so Christ laid down his life for the sheep; he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Again. "It pleased the Father to lay upon him the iniquity of us all," and he removed the iniquity of his people in one day—the day on which he suffered: for his precious blood cleanseth from all sin; and by his one offering of himself as a sacrifice he hath perfected for ever all them that are sanctified, having obtained eternal redemption for them. He hath also satisfied justice. The sword of justice awoke against Christ; it awoke against the man, God's fellow: he was smitten, and therefore the sheep were scattered, or saved from the stroke.—As it is said by our glorious Captain when his enemies went to apprehend him in the garden, and he went forth to meet them, saying, "Whom seek ye?" Then they went backward, and fell to the ground, in fulfilment of what is said in the Psalms: "When mine enemies and my foes came upon me to eat my flesh, they stumbled and fell."—Then says the Captain of our salvation to them, "If ye seek me, let these go their way."—If the surety pays the debt, the debtor goes free.

—The shepherd was smitten that the sheep might be saved from the stroke, as it is written, “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”—Again. He endured the wrath of God; he trode that wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him. How inconceivable then must his pain have been, both in body and soul, when he endured the wrath of God, and was made a curse for us! Coupling these together, let us see what the scriptures tell us of this wonderful love and condescension of our suffering, dying Saviour.—We must go the garden of Gethsemane for part of the mournful tale. He said to his disciples, “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.”—And it is said, he began to be sorrowful and very heavy.—Then saith he, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,”—And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” The second time he prayed the same, Matt. xxvi. 30—42. “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! but for this cause came I unto this hour,” John xii. 27. Again. “And, while he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, he kneeled down and prayed; and, being in an agony, he prayed

more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," Luke xxii. 39—44. Let us follow on: "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him. And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands," Mark xiv. 65.

"Then Pilate, therefore, took Jesus, and scourged him: and the soldiers platted a crown of thorns (a badge of the curse), and put it on his head; and they smote him with their hands. And they took Jesus, and led him away, bearing his cross; and they crucified him" with this glorious title written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, "This is the King of the Jews," Luke xxiii, 38; John xix. And, as a real spiritual Jew is one circumcised in heart to love God, so Christ is most certainly "King of the Jews" in all nations, and he shall reign over the house of David for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And he was fully declared to be "King of the Jews" when he expired upon the cross. John records it: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished, and gave up the ghost.—Luke. "And, when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and, having said thus, he gave up the ghost."—Mark. "And at the

ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaethani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—And Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.”—Matthew and Mark agree.

Thus we see what it cost our blessed Lord to deliver us from the wrath of God and the curse of a broken law—to finish transgression and make an end of sin—to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Well may that text in the Lamentations be applied to our Lord in his sufferings, “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger,” i. 12. By the incarnation of Christ a way into the holiest of all is made manifest, called a new and living way through the rent vail of his flesh: “He hath made peace for us by the blood of his cross;” so that God is a reconciled and a loving father in Christ to all that are enabled through grace to believe in him. The devil is destroyed, we are ransomed from his power—from the power of death eternal—and redeemed from hell and everlasting destruction. Of every believer in Christ God says, “Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.”—And, as Christ has all blessedness treasured

up in him, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," for the use of his church and people; as the Spirit is upon him without measure, for the benefit and salvation of his people; and as Christ hath removed every thing out of the way that cut off access and communion and fellowship with God; so the Holy Spirit is poured out upon Christ's seed, and the blessing of eternal life is given to his offspring; every essential grace is communicated to the elect, and planted in their hearts; and by the influences of the Holy Spirit the Lord's family are created anew in Christ Jesus, formed for God's self and for his service, to shew forth his praise; the image of God is restored to the soul, and a meetness for heaven granted. Pardon, peace, life, righteousness, love, joy, and everlasting salvation, are enjoyed in Christ by all such as are united to him, and made one spirit with him. Christ is the door of hope, the gate of life, a refuge from every storm; and the way, the truth, and the life; and by his complete and finished work he is become the author of eternal salvation to all that are brought to yield the obedience of faith unto him. None shall pluck the saints out of his hands—not an hoof shall be left behind—his many sons shall be brought home to glory—and the certainty of this is clear, because he is gone into

heaven, and has taken his seat at his Father's right hand, as the forerunner, head, and representative of his people; and, when the last believer shall be called, then he will come again the second time, to receive his bride to himself, who together will reign a thousand years in the new earth that will succeed the present; and then, after the general judgment has taken place, Christ will present all the elect to the Father, when there will not be one missing; and, that done, he will lay aside his regal sceptre, as King of grace in Zion, and, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, reign as King of glory to all eternity. But, if the human nature of Christ is mortal, how could all these blessed effects be brought about? Impossible.—He offered himself without spot to God, and therefore his sacrifice was available—it satisfied infinite justice—it made a complete atonement for the sins of God's people. "By his one offering he hath perfected for ever all them that were sanctified," or set apart in God's eternal purpose for salvation. By Christ, our great High Priest and Mediator, our prayers ascend to heaven and prevail, and our praises are accepted; and by him all promised blessings flow to the church. Out of Christ's fulness all the church's wants are richly supplied. And, as the souls of the elect are saved by grace, by the washing of regene-

ration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and thus are brought again to enjoy the image of God, so Christ is the Saviour of the body as well; for, though it is appointed to death, and necessarily dies because of sin, and must therefore, being mortal, see corruption in the grave, yet, when Christ comes the second time, the dead shall be raised, and these vile bodies of ours shall rise free from all mortality and corruption, and shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. And, when soul and body are re-united, then in our whole persons we shall see Christ as he is, and be like him; and dwell for ever with him. These are some of the many blessed effects flowing from the incarnation of the Son of God, whereby the glorious plan of salvation, so worthy of God, has been accomplished. The divine will has been carried into effect, and the Lord's purposes and decrees have been fulfilled, to the surprise and astonishment of all that partake of the glorious salvation of Christ, and to the surprise and astonishment of the angels of God, who rejoice at a poor sinner's repentance unto life, and who learn, by the church, some of the manifold wisdom of God in the salvation of sinners, and learn so as to admire, rejoice, and adore! Ephesians iii. 10, 11.

The blessed Saviour experienced those sin-

less feelings peculiar to human nature, which some call sinless infirmities; (how far the expression is proper I must leave to brighter understandings than my own;) which shew that he took a real human nature. He was weary, and sat on Jacob's well, John iv. 6. "When he had fasted forty days and forty nights (during Satan's temptations) he was afterwards an hungred," Matth. iv. 2. When he came from Bethany, and cursed the barren fig-tree, he was hungry, Mark xi. 12, 13, 14.—He thirsted, John xix. 28.—He had feelings of sympathy and compassion.—Hence we read that at the grave of Lazarus "Jesus wept," and "groaned in spirit," John xi. 33, 35.—And when he was come near Jerusalem he beheld the city, and wept over it," Luke xix. 42.—He slept: "and he was in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow, and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? when he rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm," Mark iv. 38, 39.—He was sensible of pain of body and distress of mind; but from circumstances without him, there being no cause in him. All which prove that he assumed a real human nature, which being a pure nature, we never read that he was sick; nor have we any account that he was ever in the least subject to disease. The physicians had nothing to do with him; for, being perfectly holy, and pos-

seeing no mortality, he was free from all those effects of sin with which our natures are afflicted. He was never unwell, as we are ; for, being perfectly holy, disease could have no power in him. I am now,

IV. *To oppose the belief of Christ's body being mortal ; and to shew, in some instances, the evil consequences arising from such an error.*

When a minister publishes his confession of faith to the world, or to the church, we naturally expect it will be fully confirmed by scripture ; but this gentleman only says, " Before he suffered it was a mortal body." This is his faith ; but where does he find passages of scripture to prove the truth of the assertion ? There are none at all ; therefore his confession, or this article of his faith, cannot be received. I reject it altogether, because it is not according to scripture. And upon this the church of England speaks well in her Sixth Article upon the holy scripture : " Whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith." And the scriptures are very decisive upon the subject. " To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20.

Again: "If any speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. iv. 11. Adam's nature was the workmanship of God; he was a holy, pure being, and never could have died if he had never sinned; and, if he never could have died, he never could have become mortal; therefore there was no mortality in his nature. As it was the pure workmanship of God, he was holy in both soul and body. This, I presume, is the generally received opinion. Now, if it be so, why is that denied to the Saviour which is granted to Adam? The human nature of Christ was the pure workmanship of God, the product of the Holy Ghost, and his human nature is called a holy thing; and Adam in innocency was a figure of him that was to come; therefore, if there was no mortality in Adam, there was none of course in Christ. And take notice here what a horrid consequence arises out of the assertion that Christ's body was mortal. Christ's body was formed by the Holy Ghost; therefore, if Christ's body was mortal, this shocking consequence naturally follows, that the Holy Ghost is the author of mortality! But I forbear to name the natural inference that must be drawn from such a consequence. Again: The assertion of Christ's body being mortal has this dreadful idea attached to it; viz. that the

Sen: of God took into union with himself a mortal body! If so, then where is the difference between ours and his? O, but say the advocates of this erroneous doctrine, we do not believe that there was any sin in Christ! Then, if no sin, how could his body be mortal? The entrance of mortality came into the world thus: "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Let our adversaries prove the cause of mortality in any other way if they can. And, if they cannot do this, then they establish what we defend, that Christ's body was not mortal. And thus, by a necessary consequence, ruin the cause they are labouring to support. What absurdities men run into when they are not taught of God! Again. If Christ's body is mortal, and yet he is without sin, then they hold a sinless mortality, which is as palpable an absurdity (to use the words of the late amiable Rev. James Hervey on a particular occasion) as to find sound sense and propriety of speech in a person's talking of a dark sunshine, or a round square! Again. They say "his body must have been mortal, because he died." That is easier said than proved. The sins of the elect were imputed to Christ, and to atone for those sins was one reason why he died—another reason was to satisfy justice—a

third, to appease the wrath of God—a fourth, to remove the curse from his family, he being made a curse for his people—a fifth was to reconcile God to man, and man to God—a sixth, to ransom the whole of the elect from death, hell, and the grave—a seventh, to bring us into communion and fellowship with God. But mind—he died, “the *just* for the *unjust*, that he might bring us to God.”—An eighth was to destroy the devil, and to ransom and save all the elect from his power: “forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, (their *nature*, but not the *sin* and *mortality* of their nature) that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil,” Heb. ii. 14. “The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil,” 1 John iii. 8. Those are some of the things that Christ’s death accomplished. Was his body therefore mortal because he thus died? No; for, if his body had been mortal when he died, every individual of the human race must have perished, as he could not have been a foundation for the church of God, for there could have been no church to be the foundation of. No, indeed; heaven would never have been possessed by any of the children of men. Bringing it therefore to this, and to this point so gross an error must lead, it becomes at once

a doctrinal lie, and in its horrid consequences necessarily proves a damnable heresy. Do not be startled; I will make good my ground, and prove the truth of my assertions before I have done. Blessed be God, I understand my subject well; and, having the Saviour's honour and glory deeply at heart, am therefore anxious to plead his blessed cause before a perverse, stiff-necked, and gainsaying people.

The Saviour died it is true; but there was no *cause* of death in him; there was no *necessity* for his dying, because his human nature was holy and pure, and, being free from sin, of course free from mortality; free from death as respected his own body, individually considered. There was no mortality in him when he was conceived in the womb of the virgin—none when he was born, being an holy thing—none while he tabernacled here below, for “he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”—none when he died—none when he inhabited the tomb—none when he rose from the dead—none when he ascended into heaven—none now that he is seated at the Father's right hand as our head and representative—none when he shall come the second time—nor will there, nor can there, ever be any. His body could not, in any stage of existence, be mortal. He died as a public person; as the surety of, and to save, his people. The Son

of God offered his human nature as a voluntary sacrifice, to fulfil all his covenant engagements. Hence we read, "I lay down my life for my sheep." "The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And mind this—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because *I lay down my life*, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but *I lay it down of myself*." (Aye, for ever bless him, so he did, as an immortal sacrifice, that was all-sufficient to accomplish the salvation of his people, and answer every purpose for which it was offered. "I have power to *lay it down*, and I have power to *take it again*. This commandment have I received of my Father," John x. 11, 16, 17, 18. Thus we see that the Son of God voluntarily laid down his human nature as a sacrifice for the salvation of his people—he died the just—his sacrifice was pure, and it was immortal, because sinless—not only sinless, but in union with him who only hath immortality, and who is the immortal, independent, and self-existent Jehovah. This indissoluble union made it a sacrifice ever available, possessing infinite merit to atone for sin and the guilt of it; to satisfy divine justice; to appease the wrath of God; and for ever to deliver all the objects of God's choice from going down into the pit, where none can ever hope for his truth. All his dreadful sufferings

were for the elect: and they were the sufferings of an holy person: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."—"He was made sin for us, who knew no sin (therefore no mortality), that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." His body and soul, the whole human nature, suffered; it was the atoning sacrifice. He bore the sins of many—made intercession for the transgressors—and by his stripes the elect are healed.

But our opponents will say, "What! die for sin, and on account of sin, and yet his body not be mortal!" No, indeed, his body was never mortal. He did not die for his own sins, for he had none, therefore had no mortality; but he died for the sins of his people, for the sins of others. The sins of the elect were all placed to his account—they were his by imputation. Hence he is said to be made sin for us, who knew no sin. And let it be well weighed—*the imputation of sin* did not at all, nor could it at all, affect his holy and pure nature; for that could only have been affected by *inherent sin*, or *actual transgression*, from which the human nature of Christ was free, and will be so everlastingly.

I will here shew you again what a dilemma the advocates of this false doctrine are placed in by holding the mortality of the body of

Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is our great High Priest. Hence we read that "such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26. "Every High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Then what was Christ's offering? "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every Priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God," Heb. x. 10—12. If, therefore, the body of Christ was the sacrifice offered, as the scripture says, and if our opponents will have it to be a mortal body, then of course, according to their own faith, it was a mortal sacrifice; and to trust in a mortal sacrifice is to trust in that which cannot save. What! a mortal sacrifice make an atonement for sin! A mortal sacrifice satisfy divine Justice! A mortal sacrifice appease the wrath of an offended God! A mortal sacrifice perfect for ever all them that are sanctified! No: Everlasting destruction must be the portion of all them that trust in such a sacrifice. Therefore my assertions, however severe, are true. And, if so, then it is, first, a doctrinal lie; and,

secondly, a damnable heresy. But let us leave these deluded professors, and hear what the Lord says in his word: "But Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For, if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God (there could be no mortality in an offering without spot), purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" "Without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these (with legal sacrifices); but the heavenly things (the elect of God) themselves with better sacrifices than these." But Christ's is no better, if his body was mortal—none at all. But "let God be true, and every man a liar," who contradicts his testimony, as those certainly do who say that the Saviour's body was mortal. We read that "Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and by his one offering he

hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. ix. and x. And, being a pure offering, his blood is precious, and possesses everlasting virtue, efficacy and power, to blot out of the book of God's remembrance all the sins of the elect, as well as to purge sin from their hearts. Hence we read that his precious blood is "a fountain opened to the household of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1. And in John we are told, and every saved sinner is a living witness of the truth of it, that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son (i. e. God's Son) cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7.—Here is a sure foundation for the church to build upon. An available sacrifice has been offered, that may be safely trusted in; and Christ, by his life and meritorious death, hath obtained eternal redemption for us; so that all who are brought to believe in him, with that faith that is of the operation of God, shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation. The fifty-third of Isaiah plainly shews that the sacrifice which Christ offered must be without spot; or else it never could effect all the blessings there spoken of; and hence we read, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter (but a lamb without blemish, in order that his sacrifice should be available); and, as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," as was the case before Pilate; and it

was because he put himself in the place of the guilty; he stood in their law place, and was answerable for them to law and justice. He was innocent himself; but, as he had the guilty to save, he was mute and silent, respecting his own justification. For the transgression of his people was he stricken; and when he died his body was laid in the grave, and lay there three days and three nights; but, being in itself perfectly holy, and free from all mortality, it saw no corruption, as the scriptures declare, which it must have done had it been mortal. Observe these scriptures: "Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up; having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it;" that is, because of his being free from every cause of death; and, his body having laid the time appointed in the tomb to ransom the elect from the grave, it was impossible that it should remain there any longer; being no subject for death in itself; death therefore could have no further claim when the ransom price was paid.—"Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." How should an holy one possess mortality, or see corruption, the necessary consequent?—Im-

possible. Neither did his flesh see corruption. But the advocates of mortality may say 'Does not the scripture say that he was "raised from the dead, no more to return to corruption?" Acts xiii. 34. Is not this therefore a proof that he was mortal, and saw corruption in the grave?' No, indeed, it means no such thing: the plain unstrained sense is—no more to return to the grave, ~~the place~~ of corruption for that which is mortal.—This is the true meaning; for in the thirty-seventh verse we read; "But he whom God raised again saw no corruption." Therefore, his perfect sacrifice being a lamb slain without blemish, a full atonement for the sins of his people was made, and every believer may take up the words of John, and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John i. 29; for he was truly a lamb without blemish. The advocates for the error complained of always fly to this, 'We say and believe that, though his body was mortal, yet he was perfectly holy and free from sin.' But this cannot be admitted, for you cannot serve God and Baal; you cannot retain both. If his body was mortal it cannot be holy; and, if holy, then it cannot be mortal. Choose therefore which you will have. If you reject the idol you have set up, and before which you have been singing and dancing so long, like Aaron and the people

before the golden calf, then we will believe your faith in the perfect holiness of the human nature of Christ to be real, but not till then.

I wish now to take notice of the sacrifices under the Old Testament dispensation, as from thence I hope plainly to establish the truth for which I am here pleading. They all pointed to Christ; they were types, shadows, and figures of him: hence he is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and when he came all the shadows fled away! And a lamb was offered every morning and evening while the temple service remained. And there were particular orders given about the quality of the victims to be offered: only observe the directions about the passover lamb: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats," *Ex. xii. 5*. And all the things sacrificed were to be of the best; nothing was allowed, but strictly forbidden; that was corrupt, or in any way diseased. "But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be accepted for you." Read *Levit. chap. xii.* And not only were the sacrifices to be without blemish, but the Priests that offered were also to be free from blemish and deformity, *ch. xxi. last*; from the awful corruption of the times, the offerings to God were such, that he says, "Ye

offer polluted bread upon mine altar." They offered the blind, the lame, the sick, and that which was torn: but God says, "Should I accept this at your hands?" "Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen," Mal. chap. i.

From the foregoing evidence, it is plain that no sacrifice was available with God, nor accepted, unless it was pure, and free from all blemish; and all those who offered any corrupt or imperfect sacrifice were rejected, and under the curse of God. And so now it is only the holy, perfect sacrifice of Christ that God accepts; it is that which was an offering without spot to God that can alone bring us into peace and friendship with him; and all such as hold the mortality of Christ's human nature approach to God by a corrupt sacrifice; for he is not a lamb without blemish according to their faith, and therefore both they and their sacrifice shall be rejected. A mortal sacrifice is a corrupt sacrifice; it has a blemish, and is therefore rejected of God, and a sacrifice not available with him. Such as trust in Christ's sacrifice as an *immortal* sacrifice shall ever find access to God, and acceptance with him: but such as trust in it as a

mortal sacrifice, (and a mortal one it must be if his body was mortal, because that was the offering that the Son of God, our great High Priest, had to offer,) they are not the true worshippers, and therefore shall be rejected to the end of the chapter, as were those that worshipped by corrupt legal sacrifices under the law. Just the same as the Samaritans, who worshipped they knew not what. "But," says Christ, "we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." As to those persons who persist in holding a doctrine which they cannot bring one passage of scripture to support, but resting solely upon human testimony, what a state of perverseness and blindness must such be in! for what is the witness and evidence of men when it contradicts and opposes the plain revealed will of God in his word? In this case it must be entirely rejected and set aside for ever. And, so far as good men have spoken unadvisedly with their lips, and countenanced in their writings, though unintentionally, yet in its consequences, when persisted in, that which is nothing less than a doctrinal lie, it must be rejected; and, as they have stumbled, we ought to bless God for teaching us his own truth himself, and shewing us that plainly of which they were ignorant. The mortality of the body of Christ is that Dragon that shall fall before the ark of God, 1 Sam.

v. 3, 4; and that 'Agag that must not be spared, but be hewn in pieces by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 1 Sam. xv. 33. And this blessed work I hope God has accomplished in some measure in this epistle, by the least of all his family. I come now to shew

V. The absolute necessity of Christ's body being in itself free from every cause of death, in order to preserve a sure foundation for the Church.

This having been already noticed in the course of this letter, I shall not treat largely upon it in this place. To secure the holiness and perfection of the human nature of Christ, the Holy Ghost formed his body in the virgin's womb, and it was therefore called an holy thing; and, being in union with the person of the Son of God, it must remain for ever pure and holy; nothing can corrupt a nature that is pure and holy but sin; and from original as well as actual sin the human nature of Christ was entirely preserved,* for "he did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth." And, as all sin is of the devil, so he could have no access to Christ, whereby to corrupt his nature; nor could he prevail against him. "The prince of this world cometh, but hath nothing in me."—And, as observed before, Christ being

made sin for us by imputation, that did not at all affect the purity, holiness, and uprightness, of his human nature; nay, it was necessary, absolutely necessary, that his human nature should remain holy, or, when offered in sacrifice, it could not effect all the great purposes that were required by it: but, being an offering without spot, a pure holy nature, it was all-sufficient to perfect for ever all those that are sanctified. It was an offering and a sacrifice in every sense available; "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour," Eph. v. 2. The wrath of God was appeased—justice satisfied—the curse of God executed—a full and glorious atonement for sin made—the penalty of the law fulfilled in the death of our blessed Surety—and perfect reconciliation and friendship established between God and elect sinners: "This (says God) is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And, when we view the completeness of his finished work, arising from the perfection of the sacrifice he offered, and the entire finished work he accomplished, then what a sure, what a stable foundation Christ crucified becomes to the church of God! "Upon this rock (said our blessed Lord) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 18. And observe how gloriously Christ is spoken of as a found-

stion of the church in these words: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone; a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16. And then it is shewn us that this foundation was laid in judgment being executed upon Christ, and in justice being satisfied by Christ. "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet,"—"Justice and judgment are the habitation (or establishment) of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face," Ps. lxxxix. 14. This glorious and stable foundation was laid by Paul, that wise master-builder, who speaks of it thus: "According to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon; but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. Now here is the glorious foundation of the church; and it becomes so upon the perfection of the sacrifice he offered, and upon the completeness of his finished work: but, let mortality come into his sacrifice, and I will insist upon it that Christ is no foundation of the church, nor for the church. But, while so many are going about to undervalue and undermine our glorious foundation, may the God of all grace

inspire, by his blessed Spirit, his own family to defend it; for, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Ps. xi. 3. Do! why they must defend them according to the word of God; and Gentile converts are thus spoken of: "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in," Isa. lviii. 12. When the truths of God fall into decay, God will raise up some to bring them forth to the light again, and to defend them against all gainsayers. The promise of God is sweet upon this head; for he says, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist," Luke xxi. 15.

Having thus endeavoured to set before you what my views are upon the subject in question, I now come,

VI. In conclusion, to make some observations, arising from what has been said.

How very dangerous it is to tamper and make free with words and phrases, that cannot be supported by plain unwrested scripture! And to attempt to found erroneous doctrines upon them is a proof to me that such have

never been taught of God: and errors creeping into the church in this way are productive of very serious consequences, frequently leading such to apostatize from the truth altogether, and often are a great trouble and perplexity to the true church of Christ. So it is now; and so it has been, more or less, in all ages, as the apostle Paul speaks to his beloved son Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; for the time will come (and truly is now come) when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables," 2 Tim. iv. 2—4. Here the apostle is speaking of such as began in a profession of the truth, but in process of time embraced errors, and then left the truth to follow them, and at last settled in fables, in really nonsensical things, as opposite to the truth as light is to darkness; and such go from bad to worse, till at last, if grace prevent not, they go into outer and everlasting darkness. When once the devil has got a person to believe his lies as truths, he will follow him up, and give him such views upon the subject, that his disciples, who are fond of novelty; soon begin to be lifted up with pride; and he will

so fill them with energy and zeal in the new cause, that they will compass sea and land to make proselytes, and soon rise above all the teachers whom God sends: then they begin gradually to withdraw from the public means of God's appointment, after attending where their fancy had led them, being taken with every novice that can speak fluently and soundly. Some, again, when they withdraw from public worship, stop at home, under a notion that they profit more in private. Others, again, grow so fast, that they are soon seen in a pulpit, preaching any thing, and almost every thing, except the truth as it is in Christ, and the experience that accompanies salvation. This in our times is a parallel to what Paul tells us of the destructive effects of an error in his time, against which he cautions Timothy, as also against those who assert it: "And their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some," 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. — And I wish here to observe that there is always something plausible when the devil is about to send forth his errors, as may be seen in the present instance; for the foundation of this error lies in the scriptures, which makes it easier to be received. I will point it out to you: "Jesus,

when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost; and, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake and the rocks rent, (and now mind) and the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, (to make it a truth fully manifest that he was the resurrection and the life,) and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many," Matt. xxvii. 50—53. With this the devil assailed Hymeneus and Philetus, who were left to embrace this lie as a truth; and, as it was something new, they were (no doubt) much elated at the discovery; and, the resurrection at that time (Acts xvii. 32,) being a doctrine not generally believed, this lie of Satan was received the more readily.—He suggested to them that there never would be any other resurrection than that which took place when Christ arose: this they believed, and began to propagate it with success; for some, who had before made a profession of the truth, embraced the doctrine, and so fell away from the true profession of Christ; for this plausible leaven worked like a canker, slow, but sure, and "overthrew the faith of some." But we generally perceive that errors first obtain with mere hypocritical professors, as the word says, "Because they received not the

love of the truth that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. And again: "For there must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest," 1 Cor. xi. 19; and consult Rev. xii. 15, 16.

You see the plausibility in Satan's lie about the resurrection being past, when so many bodies of saints arose at Christ's resurrection; and just so it is in the error about which we are discoursing. It bears, upon the face of it, some appearance of truth, because Christ assumed a real human nature, which died upon the cross—was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief all his days—and, as the bodies of all the human race die in consequence of sin, and because they are *mortal*, how natural it is for Satan to suggest that, as the Saviour's body died, it must also be mortal. And this trap of the adversary has taken with many, who are elated with the error, and filled with zeal to propagate it. And, Mr. V——ll having asserted it as a part of the confession of his faith, so (to be like priest like people) his church and followers have, I am told, embraced the lie as a truth, simply because he hath said it, and set up the idol in every place where he goes to preach; whereby he overthrows the faith of

some, to manifest their faith as standing in the wisdom of men and not in the power of God. Being caught in the trap, they are necessarily left to trust in a *mortal sacrifice*; but a mortal sacrifice is a corrupt one, and makes Christ to be a lamb slain *with blemish*! But, blessed be God, the true faith, with which he favours his people, rejects such an unavailing sacrifice, and believes in the sacrifice of Christ, as a pure and holy sacrifice, free from all mortality; believes in him as a Lamb slain *without blemish*; and, as "the Lord smelled a sweet savour" of rest in Noah's sacrifice, (Gen. viii. 21) so just the same in Christ's, because it was holy and everlastingly efficacious. Meditate then upon this passage, for it is sweet to the believing soul, as it was to God himself. "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given *himself* for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour," Eph. v. 2. What has a mortal sacrifice to do here? Nothing at all. Let this idol then, together with all others, be cast to the moles and to the bats, (Isa. ii. 20) and never more be heard of in the church of God, nor among them that believe and live as becometh the true saints of God. What a blessed thing it is to be preserved from error, and to be led into the truth by the Holy Spirit.

of promise! To be kept in a steadfast profession thereof, walking in the happy enjoyment of its blessings. To God's people it will ever be both a shield and a buckler, as well as a light unto their feet and a lamp to their path; and shall be settled in heaven in their eternal glorification.

I now beg leave to set before you some substantial human testimony; for, although I have before said that all human testimony is for ever to be rejected which contradicts or opposes the word of God; yet such as accords therewith, and is founded thereon, I receive and admire, as I am sure you will also.

In my opinion, neither this nor any other country ever produced two abler divines than the Rev. William Huntington and the Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady; the former of whom, in reference to our subject, speaks thus, in a letter to a friend.

“I received yours of the first instant, and have reason to conclude that God has heard my prayer in your behalf. The throne of grace, or mercy-seat, is the large room that electing and redeeming love has opened as a common receptacle, or meeting place, for all believing, hoping, praying and praising souls to meet at. Here all prevalent petitions and grievances are cast in; and it is from hence that all favours are dispensed, and all griev-

ances redressed. It is here that every chosen vessel's name appears; here every believer's case is considered; and from hence are all the angels sent with their charges and messages unto them that are, or ever shall be, heirs of salvation. From hence comes the blessed Spirit of God, like a dove of swiftest wing, with the olive leaf of gospel peace, emblematical of a final closure of the flood gates of an ireful deluge by covenant; and of an eternal peace, proclaimed *through the sweet savour of an immortal and ever-available sacrifice!* From hence comes, by the Holy Ghost, the everlasting love of God, to be shed abroad in the troubled and disquieted heart of the coming sinner. This love is the immutable and eternal bond of union, which goes from the Father through the Son to us; and runs through every circumcised heart in all the world; and through every human spirit now made perfect in heaven; and holds all the lively or living stones of mercy's fabric fast together, as united to Christ the chief corner-stone; and through him to God the Father, as the decreitive and glorious fabricator of the whole building. God laid the foundation; and it was he that made our Lord the head stone of the corner: surely this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. All glory to the first founder, and equal glory to

the foundation! Amen and Amen, says the most rugged stone in all the building.—W. H.”
Epist. of Faith. Letter XIX.

Though Mr. Toplady’s testimony is rather long, I shall quote it verbatim.

“In front of all religious mysteries St. Paul places the miraculous and supernatural incarnation of Jesus Christ: “God was manifested in the flesh.” God the Son, who in the covenant of redemption had taken upon him to deliver man, became man to accomplish that deliverance. The truth of his divinity is demonstrable from the whole current of scripture; and the truth of his human nature, or the reality of his manifestation in the flesh, is evident from his being liable, in general, to the sinless infirmities incident to men. He slept; he shed tears; he experienced hunger, thirst, and weariness; he was acquainted with pain of body, and distress of mind. In one respect, indeed, he seems to have been exempted from the common lot of other human beings: we nowhere find, to the best of my remembrance, that he ever, so much as once, experienced any attack of sickness or disease. The reason of this extraordinary circumstance was, no doubt, owing to the sinless formation of his humanity, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. Sin was that which introduced every kind of *affliction* into the human system,

and disease among the rest. But the man Christ Jesus was formed and conceived totally without stain. Hence he was like our first parents before the fall, **NATURALLY IMMORTAL!** Nor could he have died, had he not, by an act of gracious suscepcion, taken the guilt of man upon himself, and became responsible to divine Justice for the utmost payment of their penal debt. And, even under those circumstances, we read that his death, though violent, was *voluntary*. His resignation of life is constantly represented in scripture as his own act and deed. For, exclusively of his union with the second person in the Godhead, his absolute freedom from sin would of itself have been *a certain security from dying*. Hence the evangellists express themselves thus: "He dismissed, or let go, his spirit," Matt. xxvii. 50. "He resigned, delivered up, or made a surrender of his spirit," John xix. 30. As Christ was manifested in the flesh, so was he justified in the Spirit: not only justified as to the divinity of his person and mission, and proved to be the Son of God by the miracles he wrought in conjunction with the Holy Spirit; but, likewise, spiritually justified, by God the Father, from all those sins, which, as the dying surety of his people, he had taken upon himself to expiate. He was thus spiritually, or mystically, justified, and received his open

discharge, as a sin-bearing and sin-atoning Saviour, when he was raised from the dead, and released from the prison of the tomb; when the Sun of Righteousness emerged from his sad, but short eclipse; and rose to set no more." 1st Sermon on "Jesus seen of Angels," pp. 13—15, edit. 1770. Again, "Though he was tempted in all points, tempted even to idolatry and self-murder, yet he was totally without sin. He came forth *brighter*, but not *purser*, from the furnace: *brighter*, because his graces were rendered more *conspicuous* by the fiery trial; but not *purser*, because he had no moral dross to lose;" p. 24.

Speaking of the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, he further remarks, "On this occasion angels saw his human nature brighten into glory superior to theirs. An earnest and a foretaste of the majesty with which he should be invested when his sufferings (then at hand) should be accomplished;" p. 80. Upon Christ's saying, "It is finished," he thus speaks, "I have suffered enough. The types and the prophecies are accomplished. My covenant engagements are fulfilled. The debts of my people are paid. I have finished transgression; I have made an end of sin; I have wrought out and brought in everlasting righteousness. The law is magnified. Justice is satisfied. My warfare is over. My conflicts are past;" p. 37.

And thus I conclude my extracts, which I consider as beautiful, and fully to confute the erroneous notion of Christ's body being mortal. These men speak like able divines; as men taught of God, and invested by Christ himself in their offices as ministers of the Spirit; made wise to salvation in their own souls, as also in the mysteries of the kingdom of God, to understand his word, and able leaders to the churches whose ministers they were; who could go before their flocks in light, judgment, and experience; could go through the gates, gather out the stones, and lift up a standard to the people; could shew them the right way, and enforce from their own experience the word of God, and what was essential for them to know, in order to their eternal salvation. Of such as these the prophet speaks when he says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion," Isa. lii. 7, 8. Let us then pray the Lord of the harvest to send some such labourers as these into his harvest, Matthew ix. 38. And then the churches would prosper and flourish, and there would be less

complaining in our streets for want of the bread of eternal life. But truly prosperous times for the church lie at some distance before us, in the next church state, upon the resurrection of the witnesses; then, but not till then, may we expect to see Zion's cords much lengthened, or her stakes greatly multiplied and strengthened. A dark night we are hastening into. The Lord grant he may be our light, keep us and guide us, and then, "though weeping may endure for the night, yet joy shall come in the morning," when the members of his late poor suffering church will "be light in the Lord" indeed! But who shall live when God doth this!

The time approaches, however, I have no doubt, considerably within the age of man. Therefore, like Habakkuk, we must stand upon our watch, and set ourselves on our tower: "The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and not lie; and, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come," Hab. ii. 1, 2. That bright morning, promised to succeed our dark night, is as sure to shine and break forth upon the church as the word and promise of God can make it. "Glorious things are spoken of the city of God," Psalm lxxxvii. 3; yet to be fulfilled; which shall come to pass in due season; therefore may we be enabled to wait our appointed

time, until our every promised change come, as they shall never be ashamed that wait for God.

I now proceed to my Remarks upon "The everlasting love of God in Christ being the foundation of his Church."

An error somewhat similar to the foregoing. I found it recorded in a little tract, entitled "A Christian Directory," &c. written by a minister of some popularity in the present day. The tract was sent me by a friend, for my perusal. In the very first page, speaking of the church, these words struck me with surprise: "Her glorious foundation is the everlasting love of God in Christ!"

What a declension from the truth—what a departure from the faith, is here! It is hard to conceive how any person, more especially a minister, should thus commit himself. Was there ever before such a direction as this given to a Christian, that he should believe the glorious foundation of the church to be the everlasting love of God in Christ? I hope not. The love of God is a quality, a property, an attribute in God; and the communication of it is an emanation from himself. Hence we read that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

If this be the case, how can it be the foundation of the church of God? This is indeed darkening counsel by words without knowledge. And how astonishing it is that all the members of a church should approve of it!

A declaration so foreign to truth from a minister fills the heart of every one taught of God with horror, being such a flat contradiction to the plainest scriptures, for in them we read, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; and he that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16. Here the Lord lays in Zion (which is his church) for a foundation a stone: Can that be the love of God? Is it any where so called? Is it any where called a tried stone? Any where called a precious corner-stone? Any where called a sure foundation? No where in the Bible that I am aware of. Then, if so, the everlasting love of God in Christ is not the foundation laid in Zion; and of course not the glorious foundation of the church of God.

If we examine scripture, we shall soon see the Lord's meaning by the prophet Isaiah: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and

upon this rock (which thou hast confessed to be Christ, the Son of the living God) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 16, 18. Here the foundation of the church is called a rock, and the rock is said to be Christ, the Son of the living God: then it cannot be the love of God, for that is never called a rock. Again. "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix. 33. In this passage the stone and the rock mean a person; "whosoever believeth on him." But the love of God is not a person, therefore not the foundation of Zion, or of the church. Peter is very clear: "To whom (to the Lord, who is gracious) coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Again, he is spoken of thus, agreeing with Isaiah: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him (on Christ) shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious." And then it is added, "The stone which the builders refused, the same is made the head of the corner," 1 Peter, 2d chapter. And, speaking of Israel in the

wilderness, Paul says, "They drank of that rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4. If, therefore, the real foundation of the church is called a stone, a tried stone, and the sure foundation is declared to be a person; then how can it be the love of God? which, as I observed before, is a quality, a property, and an attribute peculiar to the nature and essence of God. Ridiculous is the very supposition. Again. Paul shall tell us fully what the true and real foundation of the church is; and, being a wise master-builder, employed in the building of mercy, no man was more capable of giving us an account that may be depended upon than himself: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon: but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. Here we have the real truth at once. Therefore, if Jesus Christ is the only foundation of the church, the love of God cannot be her foundation; and a person of very moderate understanding indeed can tell that the love of God is not Christ, nor Christ the love of God. But some say, the love of God is the *cause* of the foundation. But we are not speaking of the *cause*, but of *the thing itself*,

even of Christ crucified, the only sure foundation of the church of God. To make no distinction or difference between the *cause* and the *effect of that cause*, is a reflection upon the meanest understanding. — We therefore reject the everlasting love of God when put in the place of Christ, because then it becomes a gross error; for it is a false foundation, introduced to supersede the true, and consequently becomes a snare and a doctrinal lie.

Those members must be placed in a very unfavourable light indeed who join a church, that in its confession is destitute of the only real foundation which God has laid in Zion; for only observe the shocking inconsistency that such a tenet naturally embraces, which at once discovers it to be an error of no small consequence; for, like 'the mortality of the body of Christ,' it leaves no foundation at all for the church to build upon! The true and only foundation of the church of Christ is her own Saviour and Redeemer; therefore, if the love of God is the foundation of the church, it must accomplish all that the scriptures attribute to the Saviour: Is it then possible to produce a parallel of absurdities naturally arising from such an erroneous doctrine? I think not.

We abound in our day with false doctrines and bold assertions of carnal ministers. Ob-

serve the following.—A minister being asked what he meant by ‘the mortality of the body of Christ,’ or how it was to be understood, replied (to a friend of mine) that it was to be taken in the grossest sense that can be conceived !!! That gentleman, I think, must at all events be a very gross teacher, who made the assertion, which leaves us in very little doubt what spirit he is of.

Another minister has gone so far as to say that, ‘*God communicates his very nature and essence to his people!*’ And thus he deifies human nature, though God is the self-existent, incommunicable Jehovah! But in this Satan has so outdone himself, that such a man ought to sink beneath the notice of every one possessing the least reverence of God. What shocking results and what dreadful consequences arise, when men are left to speak so contrary to the oracles of God! If British Protestant ministers continue to publish from the press, and assert from their pulpits, such errors and glaring absurdities as have been issued for some time past, and such as are now disseminating, British churches will fall under the scorn, derision, and contempt, of all the world professing Christianity; and, what is worse, must incur the heavy displeasure of God.

With these remarks I close my subject; committing them to the blessing of that God, who knows how to use them (as far as they may accord with his heavenly will) for his people's good and his own glory.

I have now only to apologize for the length of this epistle: but I thought a few occasional digressions, and a little comment on some particular passages of scripture, might be agreeable; and therefore presumed to enlarge rather more than was absolutely necessary to confute the error of the mortality of the body of Christ.

I am aware there may be much of tautology and prolixity, as well as other imperfections, in these pages; for which my only apology is, that I am a man of slender talent; a very poor scholar; and, being in business, have but little time to spare; so that I have been obliged to write this letter at different times; therefore you must not be surprised if the subject is not so judiciously arranged, or neatly handled, as might be wished. Nevertheless, I cheerfully commit the fruit of my labours to your candid perusal with all their imperfections, knowing that I am not writing to a critic, but to a friend, who will read what I have said with prayer to God for his blessing, so far as I have been enabled to speak consistently with his mind and will in his word.

And, if on perusal you and the rest of the friends in Lincolnshire (for I wish them to see it) are satisfied that I have fully proved, by the word of God, that the doctrine of 'the mortality of Christ's body' is a gross and dangerous error, I shall think my time well spent in performing so good a work; and that object attained will more than counterbalance all the imperfections in the means by which it has been accomplished.

God grant that his blessing, so far as I have been enabled to vindicate the Saviour's person from degradation, and to speak to the glory and honour of his truth, may attend this epistle to the profit of souls, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

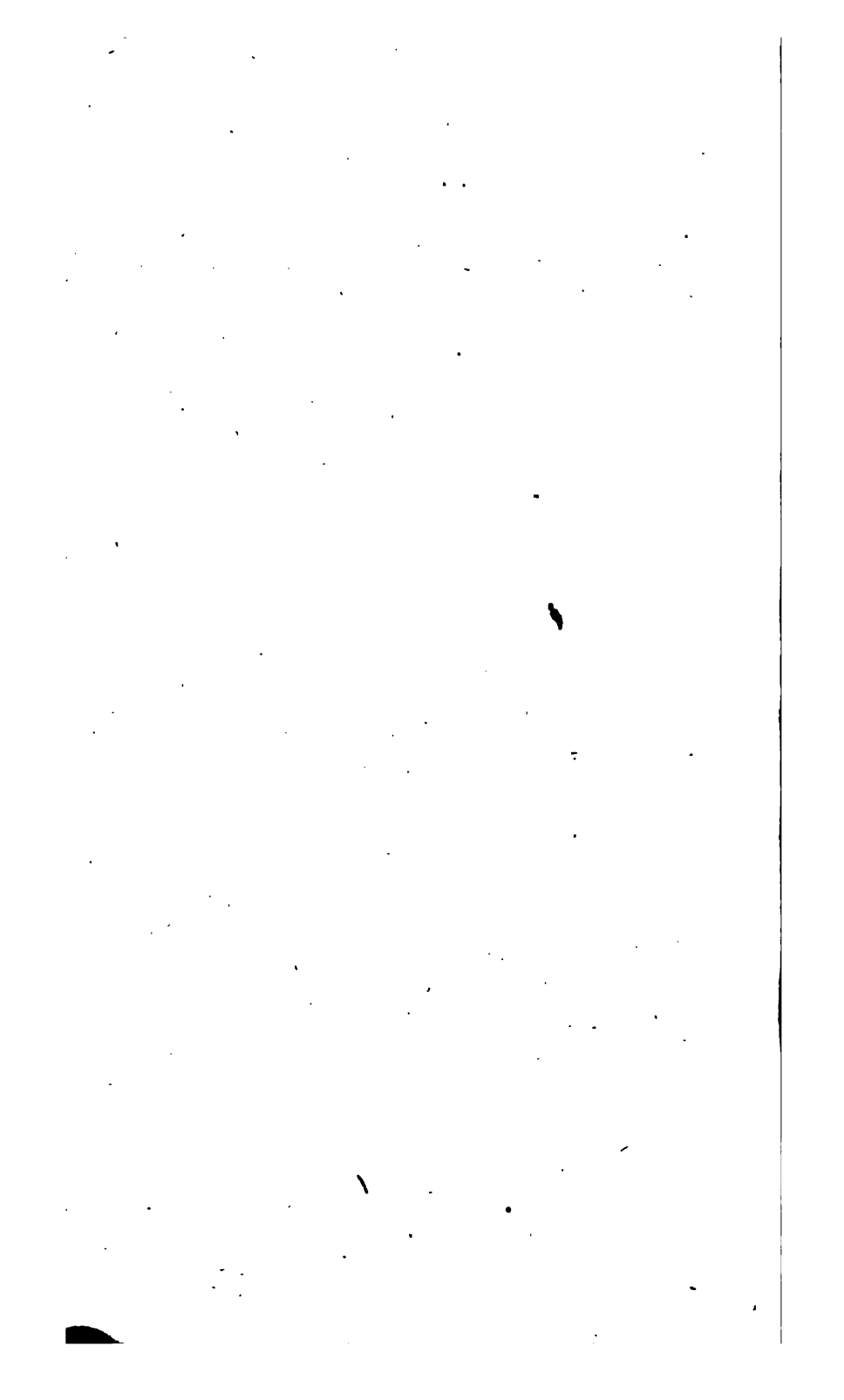
For the present farewell; and, with the best of wishes for Mrs. Isaac's and your own real happiness and prosperity, as well as for all others that love us in the faith and hope of the gospel,

I remain, my dear kind Friend,

Very truly your willing Servant,

For Christ's and the truth's sake,

C. GOULDING.



(5)

A

REFUTATION
OF
SOME UNFOUNDED CHARGES

MADE BY
MR. THOMAS OXENHAM,
OF WELWYN, HERTS.

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED BY HIM TO
MR. THOMAS BARSTON;
WITH AN APPENDIX TO
THE REV. MR. RABY;

ENTITLED
“ Tidings from Grantham.”

BY
CHRISTOPHER GOULDING.

“ He that is first in his own cause seemeth just ; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.”—PROV. xviii. 17.

“ When he speaketh fair believe him not.”—PROV. xxvi. 25.

“ The lip of truth shall be established for ever : but a lying tongue is but for a moment.”
PROV. xli. 19.

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1820.

A REFUTATION,

&c. &c.

TO

THE CONGREGATIONS

ASSEMBLING AT

PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, GRAY'S-INN LANE, LONDON;
CASTLE-GATE MEETING, GRANTHAM;
AND AT SALEM CHAPEL, LEICESTER.

*Grace be unto you, and peace, from God the Father, and from the
Lord Jesus Christ.*

DEAR FRIENDS,

IT is with much regret that I feel myself under the necessity of addressing you from the Press, in consequence of the recent publication of a pamphlet, entitled "*Tidings from Grantham*," by Mr. THOMAS OXENHAM, of Welwyn, Herts.

The unfounded statements and false assertions contained in this pamphlet have imposed upon me the imperious duty of undeceiving the Public, who might otherwise be induced to consider the Author's assertions as correct: With the view, therefore, of preventing or rectifying false impressions, and of removing from the minds of my friends any prejudice that may have arisen from the perusal of these "*Tidings*," I proceed to reply to the Author's remarks, entreating my reader patiently to accompany me to the conclusion.

Although the Author has so unhandsomely and unjustly trifled with my character, and made so wanton and fallacious an attempt to injure me in the esteem of the church and of the public, I can assure the reader that, in repelling his bitter invectives, and disproving his foul slanders, my own personal concern is but a secondary consideration.

I have always endeavoured, to the utmost of my power, in the situation I fill both in the world and in the church, to follow the exhortations and good advice of two eminent apostles, viz. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "That ye study to be quiet." And, "Let none of you suffer as a busy-body in other men's matters." Rom. xii. 18. 1 Thess. iv. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 15. With this view, I have never commenced hostilities against any one: but, finding it impossible to live peaceably with *some* men, (as the apostles' words naturally imply) I am under the necessity of withstanding this Author in his evil way.

As my present intention, however, is not to comment on the publication generally, I shall confine myself to the object before stated. Leaving out, therefore, all other parts of the "*Tidings*" but such as are embraced within that object, I shall proceed at once to make the necessary quotations, and subjoin my replies thereto. In pursuance of this plan, I begin with the following

QUOTATION.—"Now the Rev. Mr. R——y having been converted by the epistles of Mr. G——g, is now become your (Mr. Barston's) companion and guide."—p. 7.

ANSWER.—The author of the "*Tidings*" is here in-

correct in his statement respecting the conversion of the gentleman alluded to, whom I have heard relate how that blessed experience was effected upon his own soul, much to my satisfaction; and very consistently with the word of God, so far as I am capable of judging. But, as this glorious work of divine power and matchless grace was not by my instrumentality, I therefore disclaim the honour. If, however, any of my poor epistles have been a means of confirming the Lord's work, either in his soul or in others, so that the bowels of the saints have been in any degree refreshed, I am truly thankful, and bless the Lord for his great condescension; and so far, perhaps, I am not without substantial testimony, even at Gr——m.

Quot.—“ But when Mr. G——g came down last summer, he and the reverend Divine, by their persuasion, twist you about like a nose of wax, and make a tool of you to answer their purpose.”—p. 9.

ANSW.—Last summer, it is true, I was at Grantham for about a week; though I am totally ignorant of using any means, either personally or in conjunction with a reverend Divine, to twist Mr. B——n about like a nose of wax, or to attempt to make a tool of him to answer any purpose. What purpose could we have to answer? None, that I know of; and I will add, none that the author of the “*Tidings*” knows any thing of. If so, then, who is a tool? Why the author of the false charge. He it is that has a *purpose to answer* in publishing falsehood to the world, and it is he that must be accountable for the consequences. Reader, his charge is false. I challenge contradiction, and set the

author of the slander at defiance to establish his bold assertion.

Quor.—“ Well may you be in confusion, when yourself (Mr. B——n), Mr. G——g, and the reverend Divine, carry every thing with an high and arbitrary hand, as lords of the heritage. But the apostle saith, ‘ Be ye not many masters, lest ye receive the greater condemnation.’—James iii. 1.” p. 11.

ANSW. I utterly disclaim having had any hand whatever in the management or direction of affairs at Grantham Chapel; neither have I in any one instance (to the best of my recollection) been asked my opinion relative to any arrangement whatever respecting that place; therefore, so far as I am conjointly spoken of with others, as carrying every thing with an high and arbitrary hand, as lords of the heritage, the charge is unjust, and the author of it bears false witness against his neighbour. Exod. xx. 16. And the same apostle that says, “ Be not many masters, lest ye receive the greater condemnation,” saith also, “ If any man among you *seem* to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.” James i. 26. Let our author meditate upon it in his leisure moments.

Quor.—“ Can you believe, courteous reader, that after Mr. Thomas Barston, the Rev. Mr. Raby, and Mr. Goulding, had sat in council, debated and settled this weighty point—that I was no longer to be admitted into the pulpit at Grantham, months before the date of Mr. Barston’s letter—that Mr. Thomas Barston did not know how to act? From all hypocrisy and deceit, good God, deliver me! and from all such hypocritical professors!”—pp. 11, 12.

ANSW.—Can you believe, courteous reader, that Mr. Thomas Barston, the Rev. Mr. Raby, and Mr. Goulding, never at any time sat in council, nor debated, nor ever held any consultation whatever, relative to Mr. Oxenham's being no longer admitted into the pulpit at Grantham? Of a truth, however, they never did. Therefore it could not be months before the date of Mr. Barston's letter, as our author affirms with absolute certainty. No, I can assure the reader, he was never the subject of conversation amongst us; we are therefore indebted to the author for divulging this wonderful secret, the offspring of his own brain!

Quor.—"When you have done this, (viz. got some great divines from Gray's-inn-lane to keep the people quiet and peaceable, if possible,) there may be some for the Burgesses of the town; more for the Chamberlain of the city; some Gouldilians, fewer Rabyites, less Barstonians, and a few real Christians, who are grieved at heart for the wickedness of the rulers."—p. 14.

ANSW.—If we had no preachers at Gray's-inn-lane possessing a better principle than the Author of the "*Tidings*" has evinced in his Letter, I should be ashamed of them indeed. But, blessed be God, our eyes can see our teachers; we can distinguish in some measure between a mere pretender and one called of God, as was Aaron; and we know the Shepherd's voice from that of strangers, which is the reason we have never solicited assistance from the Author of the "*Tidings*;" wanting no such teachers, but rather to obtain men of *truth*. And I bless the Lord for enabling me firmly to believe (and the faith of my worthy colleague agrees with mine) that we have never denied the pulpit

at Providence Chapel to one that ought to have preached there, nor admitted one that ought to have been excluded; which is a great comfort to our minds in the situation we have providentially been placed in.

But our Author affects to be humorous in this last quotation, by dividing us into five classes, and has done me the honour of placing me at the head of a sect or party, only he will not admit me to be over any but *hypocrites*; which at first rather damped my rising importance; but, on considering the remark, and presuming it is only in consequence of being contrasted with himself and the few Christians that remain over and above the division he has been pleased to make, I recovered from the panic, and encouraged myself under the idea that, if it is 'like priest like people,' (as the scripture avers) then I am satisfied we shall not suffer greatly by the comparison. But these "few Christians are grieved for the wickedness of the rulers." Being no ruler, and having nothing to do at Grantham in Chapel affairs, of course I am not included in their wickedness. It is a disingenuous meanness in this Author to make such bold charges without a single proof in support of them; substantial proof he ought to produce, or who can believe what he so boldly asserts? Indeed it is an invariable maxim with me, that, when a person is proved false in *one thing*, he is not to be trusted in *any thing* he writes or speaks.

The five persons mentioned, and their adherents, being all set down short of real Christianity, would have grieved me, had the assertion been made by almost any other person than Mr. Oxenham, from whom I cannot conceive any reflection as dishonourable. I differ very much in opinion from him, that there are a few

Christians at Grantham who are grieved at heart for the wickedness of their rulers. And it would be well if the charge did not affect the pulpit more than the pew.

Quor.—“ But, Christian reader, this was not the real cause (why he was shut out of the pulpit at Grantham) ; and you, Sir, to whom I now address these sheets, may not be rightly informed, nor can my reader guess ; but I will inform him. As soon as it was rumoured that the poor old mangler was coming again to preach in London, many rejoiced ; and at the time appointed the chapel was crowded to excess ; many could not gain admittance ; whilst the old chapel, where the great Mr. G——g is ruler, was so thin that a little child might count them. This so stirred up the envy of this great man, that shortly after he comes to Grantham ; as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, he soon leavened Mr. Barston ; and, with the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Raby, prevailed on him to shut me out of the pulpit at Grantham. “ Thus envy slays the silly one ; neither truth, nor usefulness, nor reputation, can stand here : ” “ for who is able to stand before envy ? ” Prov. xxvii. 4. What, has this been the work of the great Mr. G——g and his colleagues ? Yes. And my dear friend Mr. Barston has been led away by them. “ Oh, my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united. ”—p. 27.

ANSW.—The reading of this may possibly have made a serious impression upon the minds of my friends, to my prejudice ; for, if this charge be true, it would at once prove that I have taken great pains to prejudice people’s minds against Mr. Thomas Oxenham, and have been the principal instrument in effecting his dismissal from preaching any more at Grantham : in consequence of which my friends could not do less than

class me among those that are "busy-bodies in other men's matters." And, as Mr. Oxenham speaks with confidence as to the truth of his charge, none of his readers (he being *professedly* a preacher of the Gospel) could of course suspect for a moment that he was uttering falsehood while he was making such a serious charge against me; for his allegations are absolute, and without hesitation as to the truth of them. His style gives them an appearance of truth, by speaking in so positive a manner. But let us search, and see if these things are so.

When I read the above quotation in one of the Author's polluted pages, how ashamed I felt for him, particularly in his assumed character of a preacher and teacher of others, and more particularly as he once walked in communion and fellowship with our late revered pastor, the Rev. William Huntington, and in different parts of this publication attempts to shield himself under the countenance and approbation of that eminent servant of Christ, affecting to pay great deference to his judgment: but, though that truly great and blessed man did for a considerable time countenance him, thinking and speaking favourably of him, and employing him occasionally as an assistant preacher; yet, from circumstances that afterwards transpired, he was induced to change his judgment respecting him, so as to cast him off; and for many years before he died never would have any thing more to do with him; he is therefore himself a living witness, and capable of contradicting what he asserts respecting Mr. Huntington in pages 25 and 26. And, had Mr. H——n been still living, and seen this last publication of his, how would he have despised the principle and spirit under which

it was written! And how would it have confirmed his judgment in having previously rejected him.

But to resume my subject. Our author says, "As soon as it was rumoured that the poor old mangler was coming again to preach in London, many rejoiced." Well, be it so, I will not contradict what I cannot disprove. But this we know, that many rejoice in a thing of nought. But "at the time appointed the chapel was crowded to excess, whilst the old chapel, where the great Mr. Goulding is ruler, was so thin that a little child might count them," (leaving us to conjecture that the chapels were of equal size.) I must again assent to this part of his narrative, though I place but little confidence in any thing he says. We must however presume that the little child's capacity was equal to his own, and then the wonder of the thing ceases. But further. A very large congregation in this lamentable state of the church is to me no proof that the best means must be there; for our Lord says of the general profession of the Sardinian church-state, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead;" and informs us likewise, that the true church is comprised in a very small compass, designated by "a few names, even in Sardis." Numbers therefore, I humbly conceive, do not furnish a correct rule of judging of the true church of Christ.

But again. "This so stirred up the envy of this great man, that shortly after he comes to Grantham," &c. That "the poor old mangler's" coming to preach should have had such an effect upon me is truly astonishing, being ignorant of the circumstance till I saw his publication. And I can assure him that I never saw any thing in "the poor old mangler" to excite my envy for

a moment, neither as a man, a professor, or a preacher; indeed he is the last man, I think, of all the human race, to excite envy in any Christian, if the "*Tidings from Grantham*" are to decide the point. If out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, or the pen writes, what a heart must the Author of these "*Tidings*" possess!!!

But when I came to Grantham I "soon leavened Mr. Barston; and, with the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Raby, prevailed on him to shut Mr. O. out of the pulpit at Grantham."

As before observed, I never, at any time, had any connection either with Mr. Barston or the Rev. Mr. Raby upon the subject referred to. Mr. Oxenham's name was never mentioned between Mr. Barston and myself, to the best of my recollection, during my visits at Grantham. And Mr. Barston shall justify me from "the poor old mangler's" unjust reflection, by an extract from his Letter, wherein, after noticing the mangler's false accusation respecting our sitting in council, to turn him out of the pulpit, he says, "This you know, Mr. Goulding, is a downright falsehood, for I do not recollect ever mentioning Mr. Oxenham's name to you, as I believe we differed in our opinions of him; therefore how could I sit in council with you and Mr. Raby upon this mighty matter, seeing I never introduced the name of Mr. O——m? This therefore is totally without foundation."—And then, speaking of there being an agreement among us months before his dismissal from Grantham took place, he says, "This you know is false also; for no such agreement ever was made or thought of.—" "How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hid things sought up!" Obad. 6.

The next part of his charge I retort upon himself; viz. "Thus envy slays the silly one" (and sometimes the wise too); "neither truth, nor usefulness, nor reputation, can stand here;" "for who is able to stand before envy?" (not even when found in a poor old mangler.) Prov. xxvii. 4. "Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation."—Prov. xxvi. 26.

But I proceed. "What, has this been the work of the great Mr. G——g and his colleagues? Yes. And my dear friend Mr. Barston has been carried away by them."

And has Mr. Thomas Oxenham made this charge? has he first proposed to the reader *his own false statement* as applicable to others, and then in his answer confirmed the same as a truth? Yes, he has, and that without shame! But "should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of (vain) talk be justified? Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?" Job xi. 2, 3. If man fail of this, God will not, for "the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped." Psalm lxiii. 11.—And how true it is that "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." Jonah ii. 8.—But my readers, I think, by this time will be quite ashamed both of this man and his communication, when I inform them that this charge, like his others, is totally false, as I never used any means whatever to expel him from Grantham. Indeed I never felt interested about him in any point of view whatever; therefore why he has commenced hostilities against me upon such very unequal terms, he best knows; for, as I am innocent of what he lays to my

charge, I have greatly the advantage of my false accuser, and feel a pleasure in justifying my conduct from the foul aspersions of such a contemptible author.

A very eminent servant of Christ, who flourished in the last century, and who was treated in a similar manner with myself on the present occasion, thus expresses himself; and I adopt his words, changing only one:—"What shall we say of a man, who first hatches *falsehood*, and then fathers it on others?—The person who, in private conversation, utters a designed untruth, is deservedly branded with disgrace. But the man who sits down, and deliberately writes a known, wilful, palpable lie, to the public, may, it seems, still be 'a saint,' and a 'precious labourer in the Lord's vineyard!' Away with such 'saintship'—away with such 'precious labours!' And so say I; and here I take the passage of scripture that concludes this vile paragraph, as expressive of my sentiments in reference to our Author: "O! my soul, come not thou into his secret; unto his assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."

But I am "the great Mr. Goulding;" pp. 27, 30. Unconscious of ever having assumed an unbecoming importance, if the Author of the "*Tidings*" has nothing to produce in proof of this reflection, I must leave it as unsubstantiated, hoping that I shall ever be found to possess such a principle, and such a measure of grace, as to keep me from falsely slandering the character and reputation of others, enabling me to live honourably in my profession, and in the cause of God and truth. The gentleness and gracious dealings of the good Lord will ever make and keep me thus great, I humbly hope; 2 Sam. xxii. 36.—Psalm xviii. 35.

Quot.—"He may be a great man and a good man, for aught I know."—p. 31.

ANSW.—Here is a proof of the Author's consistency!—While he admits that I may be a great man and a good man, for aught he knows, he styles me—one among false brethren—a dissembler—a hypocrite—a wicked man, filled with artful cunning—a deceitful, arbitrary ruler, and one acting under the influence of Satan. Now, admitting this testimony to be true, how is it possible that I can be either a great or a good man?—How strange a contradiction! It is, however, a comfortable assurance that my state can in no wise be altered by any thing that Mr. Thomas Oxenham is pleased to say.

The cockatrice egg is at length crushed, and out comes the viper.—Isa. lix. 5.; whose fruit is a fiery flying serpent.—Isa. xiv. 29.

Quot.—"I have no objection to meet you (Mr. Barston), Mr. Goulding, the Rev. Mr. Raby, and the Rev. Mr. Stockdale, at any time and place, with one Christian friend only with me as a witness; and by God's assistance I will prove from his word that your present conduct is contrary to the same."—p. 36.

ANSW.—But what part of our conduct is to be proved contrary to the word of God? I suppose he means that we did, in conjunction, agree to turn him out of the pulpit at Grantham, and that our plans have proved successful; on which account Mr. Thomas Oxenham is out of humour, filled with rage, wrath, and bitterness, so as to excite his scurrility, invective, and abuse. This, I presume, is the supposed conduct that

is to be measured and condemned by scripture. Indeed, the burden of his song, or rather howling, (Isa. lxx. 14.) is, all through his book, that there has been a coalition between us, pp. 7, 10,—a council held by us, p. 11,—a confederacy formed by wicked rulers, pp. 12, 14,—a connection between us, p. 16,—an association established, p. 19,—an agreement made, pp. 22, 23,—colleagues, acting under the influence of Satan, p. 35,—conspirators, engaged in a conspiracy to expel him from Grantham, p. 39. And, in consequence of this, we are challenged to meet him, that he may display his abilities in proving us transgressors.

But, unfortunately for this poor deluded man, there never was such a coalition, &c. &c. &c. &c. as he speaks of, except in his own bewildered fancy.—That famous warrior, Don Quixotte, fought bravely when he engaged a windmill; but our Author is much more ludicrous, for he can fight with his own shadow, rather than not be a man of renown in the world. To have mispent so much time, however, on *his* account, would have made him of too much consequence; seeing he has made lies his refuge, and under falsehood has attempted to hide himself.—Is. xxviii. 15.

So then, after all his noise and bustle, and after sending us his mighty challenge, like Goliath of old, to show us what great and mighty feats he is able to perform, it proves that he wants to dispute with us about a non-entity; and we are to be proved transgressors for what never occurred. He forges lies—fathers them upon us—holds them up before the public as truths to disgrace us, and then challenges proof that our conduct is contrary to the word of God! And this is the man that wishes the public to believe that he has been very

ill treated by us? Away with such villany! Every honest mind must detest such "cunning craftiness," and cry shame on its author.

It is now high time that the innocent should stir up himself against the hypocrite (Job xvii. 8); that the impostor should be stripped of his false covering, and manifested in his true colours; for the man that can thus act, is a man that hath rendered himself worthy to be despised. This Author appears in my view quite as ludicrous and as complete a picture of shame, as the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Moabites of old,—recorded Isa. xix. 14. xx. 4.—Jerem. xlviii. 26. which my reader may examine at his leisure.

Quor.—"Mr. G. by his present way of writing a few letters, and conversation among what are called friends, obtains the praise without the shame; the glory without the reproach; the fame, without the scandal of the cross, of being a great man."—pp. 37, 38.

ANSW.—Our Author then admits that my labours are not in vain, insinuating, however, (as he has done before) that it is only among such as are called friends, those that are ignorant of the mind and will of God in the mysteries of the kingdom, that have merely a name to live while dead. This at first discouraged me, till I again reflected who the author was; upon which I recovered myself, finding a little faith in exercise under the consideration that my labours in writing and conversation had by his own acknowledgment been in a measure made useful to some real friends among the children of God. When the blessing of the Lord attends an epistle, it then becomes weighty and powerful, and is profitable to the soul of the reader, as we

read in 2 Cor. x. 10. And, when blessed with a good conversation in Christ, so as to speak of the glorious majesty of his kingdom enjoyed in the heart, and to talk of his power, by which it is established there, then we become a sweet savour of Christ among the saints, and find union and fellowship one with another, which, as it is precious to us, so it is well pleasing to the Lord. Conversation among the saints is at all times commendable, and ought to be particularly attended to in the present low estate of the church. In times similar to the present, the scripture informs us that Christian conversation appears with the marked approbation of God; for thus it is written,—“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another” (there was great diligence in it;) “and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.”—Mal. iii. 16, 17. Thus the conduct I have pursued appears to me to be consistent with the mind and will of God in his word, which is the best countenance I can have in justification of my proceedings.

Again. As the Author allows that I have obtained the praise, the glory, and the fame, of being a great man, it is no wonder that he views me with such a jealous eye, seeing that I am rising upon his sinking credit. Besides, our Author says, “I believe Mr. G—g to have more wisdom than you all, put you all together.” If so, then I must be a proper person to become their leader. This, however, is going to the other extreme; and I must decline the honour thus conferred upon me, believing there are some in that place much

my superiors in wisdom. They are not in that low, beggarly situation, at Grantham, that our Author seems to represent. Besides, if he has occasionally laboured among them for twenty-three years, and they are yet in such a state as he insinuates, it is saying very little as to the usefulness of his ministry among them. And surely a change must of course be desirable, in hopes of finding more profitable means.

As to the particulars, supposed to have been spoken by Mr. B——n of me; I can only thank him for his good opinion, so far as he may have said any thing in my favour; and I am very sorry he has so greatly overrated any experience, gifts, or abilities, the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon me, honestly assuring my friends that he has a much better opinion of me than I have of myself: but, to the honour of God, I am free to confess, that whatever I am above a lost, hell-deserving sinner, it is by his free, sovereign, undeserved grace that I am what I am; and I humbly pray the Almighty to make such use of me, in the church and in the world, as shall be to his glory.

Quot.—(*From the Appendix addressed to the Rev. Mr. Raby.*)
 —“Why did you, Rev. Sir, write such falsehood to your friend Mr. G——g, after the death of Mr. Toms? When a respectable lady, a few months after, went to London, and was at Mr. G——g’s shop on business, Mr. G——g mentioned the false report you sent; but the lady soon convinced him the information was false. The same lady called upon me on her return, and informed me of the circumstance. I therefore advise you in future to write nothing but truth to your friend, lest you both be put to shame.”—pp. 41, 42.

ANSW.—Will this man never have done with his

unjust calumny and gross falsehood? I challenge him to produce his proofs of this and his other assertions. And, if such as write falsehood are deserving to be put to shame, as he himself says, (which is asserting a great truth) then how richly has our author merited this! and I doubt not but he shall have it measured to him abundantly. What is spoken against Jerusalem is applicable enough:—"This is thy lot (the shame he cautions others against), the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood, therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear: for the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare."—Jeremiah xiii. 22, 25, 26.

But my readers, I am sure, will be amazed when I inform them that the Gentleman alluded to never wrote any falsehood to me after the death of that eminent saint, Mr. Toms;—that the respectable Lady referred to was never at Mr. G——g's shop on business;—that I never spoke one word to the Lady alluded to, upon any report whatever;—that this Lady, so far from convincing me of any false information received from my friend, never had any conversation with me upon the subject spoken of; for, presuming the Lady referred to, to be Mrs. Palmer of Grantham, that Lady, in the presence of two friends, declared to me, that all Mr. O. has asserted, relative to the conversation said to have passed between herself and me, is totally false; and very generously allowed me to make use of her name. That she called upon Mr. Oxenham on her way home, is true; but that she informed him of the circumstance of our conversation, as mentioned by Mr. O——n, is utterly false.

For a man thus to write notorious falsehood and misrepresentation, and then to advise and exhort the falsely accused (whose character sets him far above the very suspicion of falsehood, and whose principles keep him in possession of truth in the love of it) to be careful in future to write nothing but truth to his friend, lest both be put to shame; when he himself is so deeply involved in the very sin of which he is falsely accusing others and cautioning them against, is truly awful, and such conduct as shall never go unpunished; for, "The Lord God of recompences shall surely requite."—Jerem. li. 56. "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight."—Prov. xii. 19, 22; with Psalm lxiii. 11. David was thus sorely tried by the falsehood of others; hence he says, "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?"—Psalm cxx. 2, 3. As applicable to our Author, I presume to give this answer: "Lord, do with him as seemeth thee good!"

Who then has acted, under the influence of Satan, the part of Diotrephe, in prating against others with malicious words—me, my fancied colleagues, or Mr. Thos. Oxenham? Let the candid reader judge and decide.

As he has presumed wantonly to sport with my name and character without any just cause, I give him the whip, hoping in future that he will learn to pay more respect to the reputation and character of others, though he should still continue to make such an easy sacrifice of his own.

But when Mr. O——m asks Mr. Raby, why he wrote such falsehood to me after the death of

Mr. Toms (which I have proved to be false) I imagine he alludes to what Mr. Toms said respecting himself. And that he did speak unfavourably of Mr. O——m cannot be successfully controverted, several of the friends having heard Mr. Toms declare how burdensome Mr. O——m's company was to him, that he was always shut up in bondage when in his presence, but found liberty when he was gone. In corroboration of this, I subjoin the testimonies of two respectable witnesses, written by their own hands, which are as follow:—

“The substance of two conversations between Mr. Toms and Mr. —— respecting the feelings of the former when in the company of Mr. Oxenham. .

“The first conversation took place not long after Mr. Toms came to reside at Grantham. Mr. —— observing him unusually silent when in Mr. Oxenham's company, quite contrary to his common practice, for he was generally very communicative of God's dealings with him, the first private opportunity pressed him closely on the subject, suspecting the cause.

“Mr. T. then confessed how burdensome Mr. O's company was to him; and, amongst other things, mentioned the circumstance of Mrs. Stones' wanting him to meet Mr. O. to dinner, which he declined. But Mrs. S. not admitting a refusal, and declaring she should come to fetch him, he assured Mr. —— that he went out, and walked up to Mr. Hall's, when he expected her arrival, on purpose to be out of the way; during which time she actually came for him. He had agreed to go to tea, which he did about five o'clock; from that time till time he declared he could not open

his lips, and that he felt such weariness as he never had before in all his life. Mr. O. then went away with Mr. Barston. Mrs. Stones desired Mr. Toms to stay supper. After Mr. O's departure, he said, 'It was quite marvellous, but his mouth was immediately opened, and he began to talk as freely, and spent the remainder of the evening as pleasantly, as ever he had done before.'

"The second conversation was the latter end of the week preceding the last Lord's day that ever Mr. Toms heard Mr. O. preach.

"Mr. ——— then called on him, and joked him on Mr. Oxenham's coming; telling him that the next week he must be content to dwell on the mountains of Gilboa, for there would be neither dew nor rain. When he said again, that 'really it was marvellous how he was tied and bound up when in Mr. O's company,' laughing in his way. 'Yes,' replied Mr. ———, 'you must submit to go into the pillory again on Sunday.'

"That Sunday he heard the discourse, and afterwards made the observation alluded to in Mr. O's pamphlet.

"Mr. ——— also recollects having heard Mr. Toms speak of the bondage he felt when in Mr. O's company."

"The substance of the conversation between Mr. Toms and Mrs. ———, respecting the feelings of the former under Mr. Oxenham's last sermon:—

"Mrs. ———, at that time being in much soul trouble, was lamenting that she had not profited under the sermon, when Mr. Toms replied, 'I don't know how you should—there was nothing for you. For my part, I never sat so uncomfortably in my life: if there had

been a back door, I would have gone out.—I cannot make out the man.’”

Having, I hope, given sufficient proof that the Author of the “*Tidings*” is “a liar, and his speech nothing worth,” Job xxiv. 25. so far as he has ventured to impeach my character, and sully my reputation,—I now presume to offer to my reader’s consideration a few reflections in reference to our Author, drawn from his insidious “*Tidings*.”

Is this indeed true of Mr. Thomas Oxenham, who is so full of proud, confident boasting, and self-praise, all through his work?—who in his preface speaks against false brethren, who with clouted shoes, rent bottles, and mouldy bread, have in every age, by their hypocrisy and lying testimony, crept into the professional church of God?—who speaks of dissimulation, hypocrisy, and the artful cunning of wicked men?—who is so plausible, and speaks so fair as to insinuate that his only wish has been that the *truth* might be stated and made plain; that the mask of hypocrisy might be removed; that men might appear in their *proper colours*?—that misrepresentation might be prevented?—and who declares that he presents the reader with the truth of the matter?—and who exhorts every follower of the Lamb to take care that *truth* is his shield and buckler; that he walks honestly, as children of the day; and that such shall have the witness of God and conscience? And is this the man who says of another, that from his long profession he might reasonably have hoped that he would have written and spoken truth, as in the sight of God, at whose bar we must shortly appear? p. 1.—who prays to be delivered from hypocrisy and deceit,

and from hypocritical *professors*? p. 12.—who speaks of the wickedness of rulers, without bringing one proof of any wicked act? p. 14.—that prides himself in speaking truth? p. 16.—that says he is at a point in what he *writes*? p. 17.—who reproves another because neither his work nor walk are perfect before God? p. 20.—who boasts of his seniority, of his property, of the glory of his ancestors, who for many centuries resided on their own paternal estates in the county of Devon? of his eminence as a servant of Christ? p. 22.—that contrasts another with Judas, from an inference drawn from his own false statement? p. 24.—who speaks of others being led away by a lying report, and as though Mr. Huntington had never cause to reject a member of his church after many years fellowship therewith; when the Author of the “*Tidings*” is a living witness that such was the case with himself many years before Mr. H——n’s death? p. 26.—who speaks of the impudence of others? p. 28.—that talks about being ashamed of the nonsense of another, and that no hawking pedlar ever carried worse ware, nothing savoury falling from his lips? that a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and not the leaven of malice and wickedness, for he that hateth a brother is a murderer, and that the God of recompences will surely requite? p. 32.—who speaks of those he thinks proper to accuse, as being influenced by Satan, and, like Diotrephes of old, prating against himself with malicious words, grounded entirely upon a charge that never existed but in his own deceitful mind? p. 35.—that boasts so much of his large measure of grace, knowledge, experience, usefulness, liberality, and of his great weight in an even balance; yea,

harder than all he has been pleased to traduce and vilify? p. 86.—who speaks of digging a pit for another, and of falling into it themselves? p. 39.—of the base conduct of such as will stab a person's reputation in the dark, and of a person's condemnation both by the moral law, gospel precepts, and the law of faith? p. 39.—who accuses one of speaking lies when not a lie was spoken, and advises him to write nothing but truth to his friend, lest both be put to shame? and applies this scripture, "a lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it;" who challenges to himself, as a minister, honour and uprightness? pp. 41, 42. And, lastly, who condemns busy bodies in other men's matters; concluding the whole with this significant passage, "Every fool will be meddling?"—I say, is this true of Mr. Oxenham, who styles himself a preacher of the gospel, and an eminent servant of Christ? To answer him in his own sneering, ironical style, I say, "Yes, this is the man, bless his honest heart!"—p. 12.

The summary of his charges against, and of his reflections upon, others, which I have given, I presume to think fully evinces his own condemnation; and I appeal to the judgment of my friends for the truth of the assertion. How does the Lord "disappoint the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise: He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward he turneth headlong."—Job v. 12, 18.

What guilty reflections must this Author have in private!—What feelings of remorse ought to exist in his heart! How awful the reflection, that, after such a long profession, and after having been a preacher so

many years, he should be given up at last, like Ahab's prophets, to the deception of a lying spirit, so as to publish from the press, before the Church and the public at large, for truth, notorious falsehood! which makes it but too manifest that the tree is corrupt, because the fruit is such. Hear the mind and will of the Lord in this matter; "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."—Matt. vii. 15—20. This is the only safe rule to judge others by.

It is not an abundance of bold, presumptuous talk, and self-confident pretensions, that are to be attended to; but by a man's real conduct we are to examine and judge of him:—not by his words, when his works are evil.

"No big words of ready talkers,
No dry doctrine will suffice;
Broken hearts and humble walkers,
These are dear in Jesus' eyes."

Such excellent fruit is a proof that the tree is good; a tree of righteousness, the right-hand planting of the Lord, by whom he is glorified. But the conduct of our Author is quite as inconsistent as for the Devil to preach up holiness, enforce good works, and reprove

for sin, while he is filled with evil, and does nothing but sin himself.

Had Mr. O——m's expulsion from Grantham been attended with such effects as the children of God would have been pleased to observe, it would (in my humble opinion) have led him to self-examination, and to humble prayer to God, to shew him wherefore it was that he was thus contending with him; and not to rage and storm, and accuse others falsely, as he has done. And, had he followed the wise man's advice, it would have been well; but, having neglected his wholesome counsel, he must abide by the consequences. "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and discover not a secret to another; lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away."—Prov. xxv. 8—10.

Again. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and, if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but, if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."—Matt. xviii. 15—17. This is a precious rule laid down for our conduct when a brother offends; and, if our Author had acted according to this plain, simple rule, he had saved himself much shame and contempt, as well as prevented the cause of God and truth, and his church and people, from being evil spoken of by such as are ever

seeking occasion of reproach against us. But it appears that private admonition would not have answered his purpose. One reason he gives why he published from the press is very curious, viz. because Paul withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed. But how publishing from the press can be the same as withstanding a person to the face, even though in the presence of others, I must leave for Mr. O——m to reconcile. Well may it be said, “Into the pit which he hath digged” is this mighty man of valour “fallen.”—Prov. xxvi. 27.

To my comfort, the Lord hath said, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.”—Matt. v. 11, 12. It is only to give such men as our Author sufficient latitude, and (sooner or later) they are sure to be their own executioners; for he has completely committed suicide upon his own character and reputation, and held himself up to shame and contempt before the Church and public at large; and, as far as I am capable of judging, has brought himself under five out of the seven things which the Lord hates, and which are an abomination to him.—Prov. vi. 16—19. Let my friends judge for themselves, if this be not an awful truth!

If the object aimed at in the publication of the “*Tidings*” was to excite private animosities, to sow discord among brethren, to stir up strife and contention in the church, and to separate real friends, which to me is sufficiently apparent; then the Author has completely failed in his object, for it has had quite the contrary effect, by producing more harmony among

the friends than ever; and has been the means of removing the Author from the esteem and affections of many who, before the publication of the "*Tidings*," thought favourably of him. And thus we see that the evil attempts of men to injure others are so overruled as to prove that they are among the "all things" that shall "work together for good to them that love God and are there called according to his purpose." How pertinent is that of David, "Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape."—Psalm cxli. 10.

What a spirit manifests itself all through the "*Tidings*!" what scandalous reflections! what low, paltry remarks! In its title page the motto should have been, "Mangling done here!" How shameful is it in the Author to publish the private, confidential communications of another from the press! And how shocking, to behold such a chain of notorious falsehoods spoken in the most confident and solemn manner as truths!!

The friends at Grantham will now, I hope, be more careful who they admit into their pulpit, and not be led astray by the speech of such as are puffed up whilst destitute of the power; for the preacher that holds the truth in unrighteousness is the most dangerous character the church has to contend with. If it were possible, such would deceive the very elect: but the Lord's impossibility secures their eternal safety from the too frequent destructive snares of such artful fowlers. The royal preacher has exhibited a beautiful and striking contrast between a wise and foolish man, where his description of the latter character appears to portray very correctly our Author and his work. "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, but the lips

of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness"—Eccl. x. 12, 13, which I am satisfied will affect none so much as himself. And, as to the *former* character, that of the *wise man*, hear also what the word of God elsewhere declares. "For he said, Surely they are my people, children that *will not lie*: so he was their Saviour."—Isa. lxiii. 8. And again, "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor *speak lies*; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth."—Zeph. iii. 13. This is a scriptural mark of the children of God; and which of these two characters my antagonist must be classed with, I leave to my readers to determine.

To conclude. I now solemnly declare that I would not be in the situation of the author of the "*Tidings from Grantham*" for all the world and the glory of it, twice told! Indeed, were I the author, I should be ashamed to be seen in public—more so in assembling with the saints—but more still in standing up in a pulpit as a minister and teacher of others. But, alas! it is too apparent that some men refuse to be ashamed till the God of recompences puts them to shame himself. Paul gives a beautiful description of the characteristics of a faithful minister of Christ, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. vi. ver. 3—7. "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience—by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." It had been well for our Author had he

paid due attention to this divine standard, before he sent forth his "*Tidings*" from the press, and I would strenuously recommend it to his serious consideration for the future.

And now, my friends, farewell for the present: may truth be our shield and buckler, so that we may walk worthy of our high vocation, and be enabled to glorify the God of our salvation in all things, for his loving-kindness and tender mercy manifested to us in his dearly beloved Son; for "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." Micah vii. 18. "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 29.

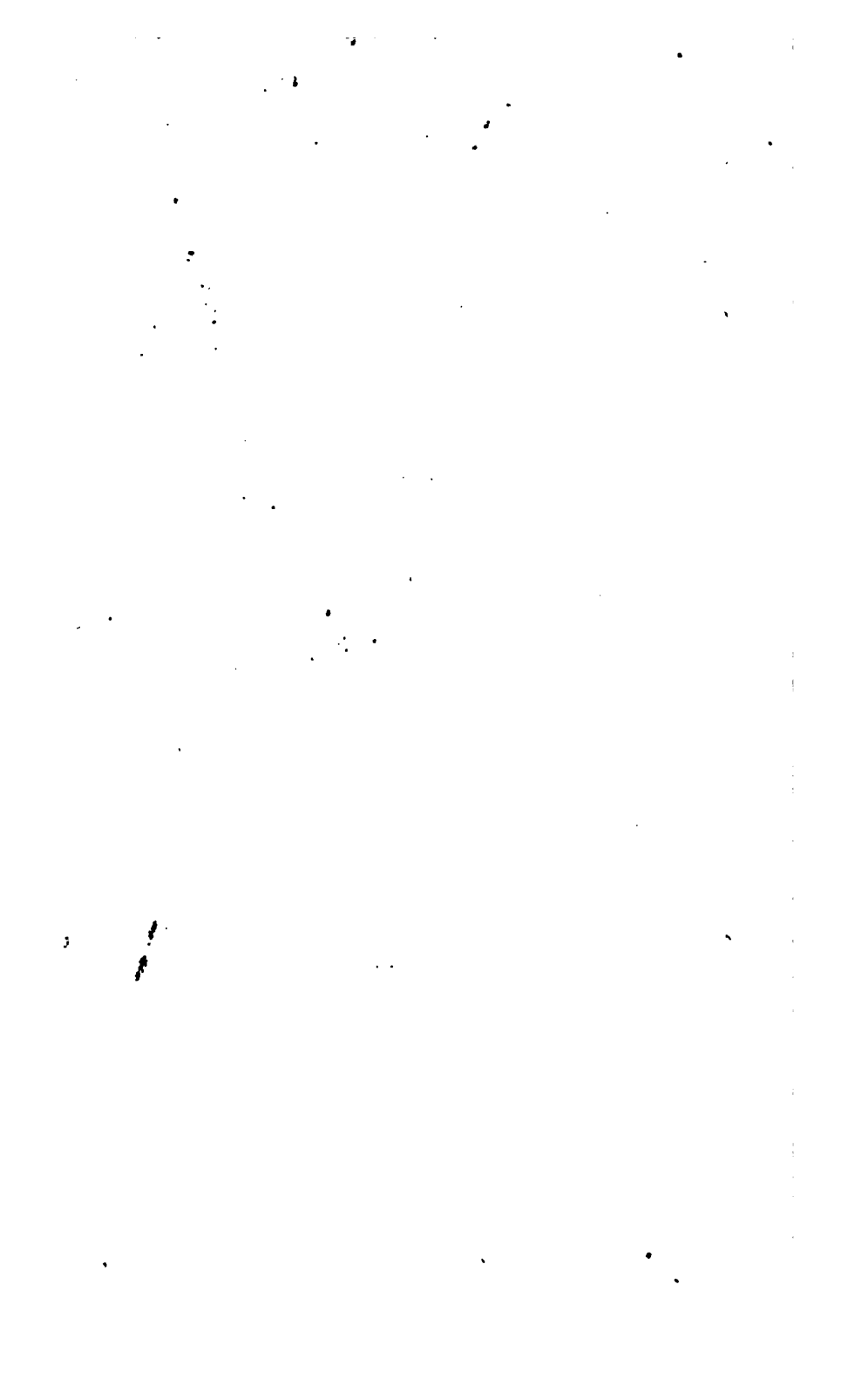
That this promised victory may be ours, and that God, who is the author of it, may be our everlasting portion and exceeding great reward, is the desire and prayer of,

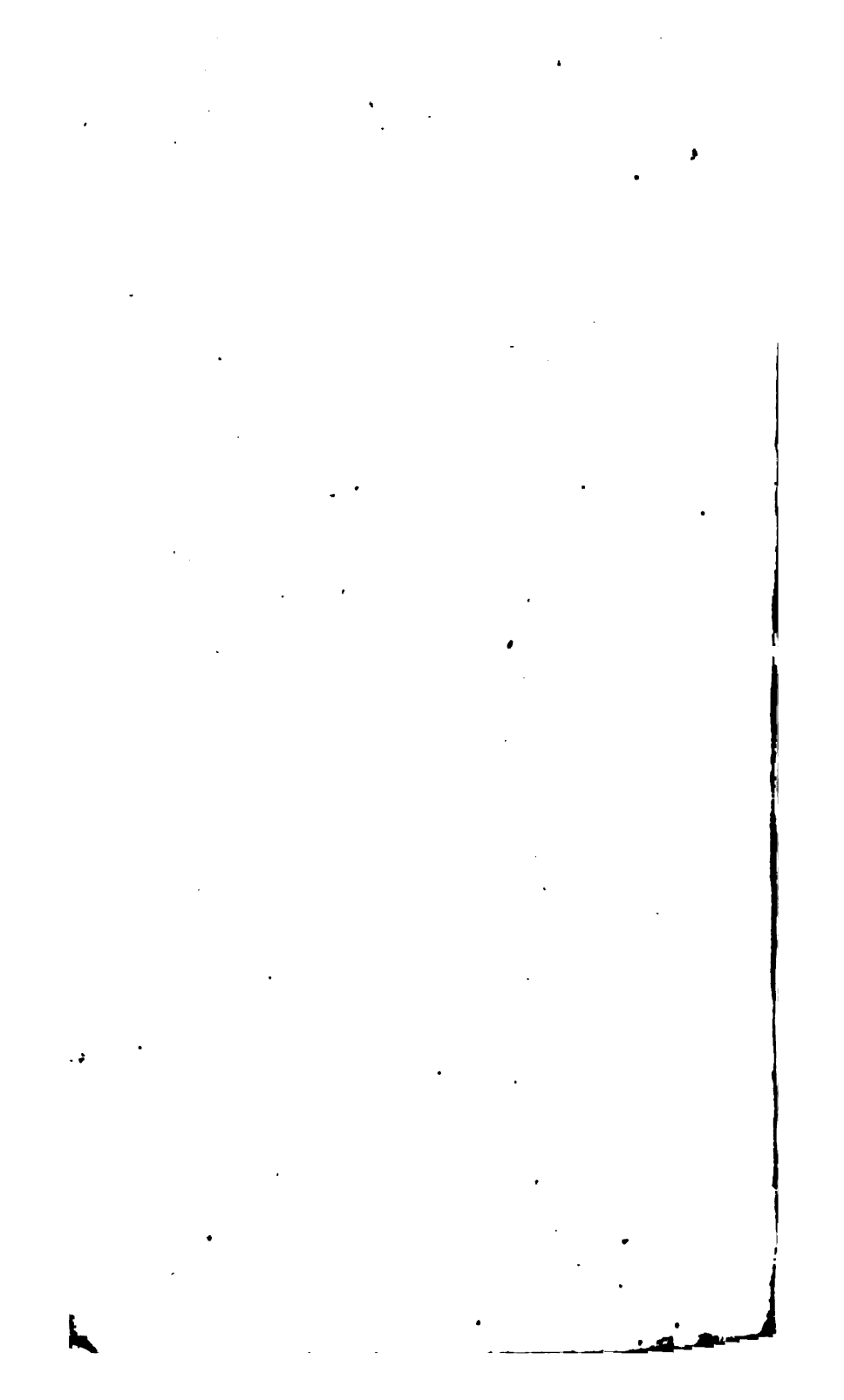
Dear Friends,

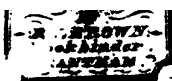
Yours very truly for Christ's sake,

CHRIST. GOULDING.

*Northampton Square, London,
1st Aug. 1820.*







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72

